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GAME Player's™

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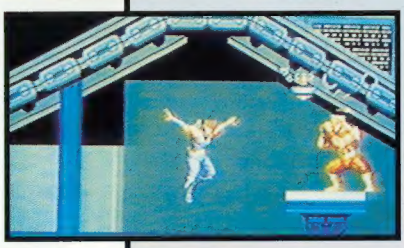
THE LEADING MAGAZINE OF VIDEO AND COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

G.I. JOE

NINTENDO® GAME OF THE MONTH



STRIDER
FOR SEGA GENESIS
4 PAGES OF TIPS!

MAGICIAN
GAUNTLET II
ROLLERGAMES
ULTIMATE BASKETBALL
WRESTLEMANIA CHALLENGE
BANDIT KINGS
MUPPET ADVENTURE
PRINCESS TOMATO
CHASE H.Q.
GREMLINS 2
HAL WRESTLING
COUNTDOWN
M.U.S.H.A.
BRAVOMAN

KING'S QUEST V
5-PAGE FEATURE

SWORD OF HOPE
FOR GAME BOY™!

MARCH 1991 01092
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THE SIMPSONS™

BART VS. THE SPACE MUTANTS

Hello, fellow humans! Bartholomew J. Simpson here, with a big secret:

Space mutants are invading Springfield!

Yours truly is the only one who can see 'em—so it's up to me to stop 'em. I've gotta spraypaint things, get radical on my skateboard, and in general behave like a nuisance, man. It's a good thing I've got the rest of the Simpsons to help me out.

So if you're a decent person, a patriot, save the Earth! *Buy this game!*

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MEGA MAN 3
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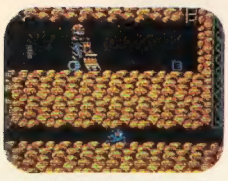
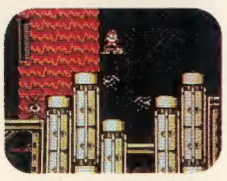
MegaMan® 3. Anything else you need to know?



You'll slide through secret tunnels to avoid bulldozing robots.

It's hard to top TopMan's dangerous spins.



You and your sidekick Rush will fly over enemy territory to avoid the walking time bombs.

SnakeMan, HardMan, GeminiMan, MagnetMan, NeedleMan, ShadowMan, SparkMan and TopMan. They're the eight new robotmasters in MegaMan 3. Defeat them all and you'll still have Dr. Wily to deal with. And possibly even a few of your old enemies from 1 and 2. Okay, now the only question that remains is how fast you can get to the store and get 3.

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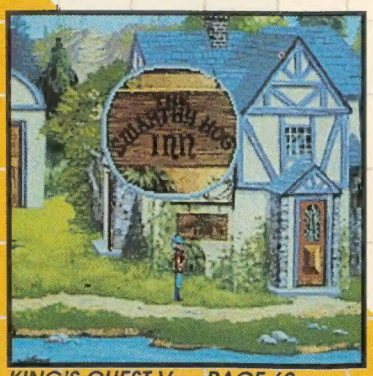
CONTENTS

G.I. JOE — PAGE 52



KING'S QUEST V — PAGE 62

POWERMONGER — PAGE 46

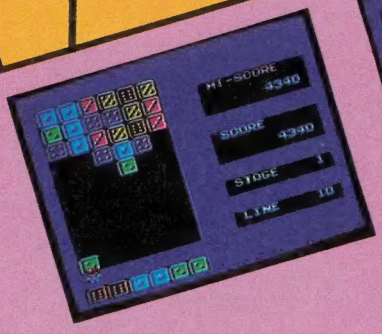
NINTENDO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP — PAGE 16

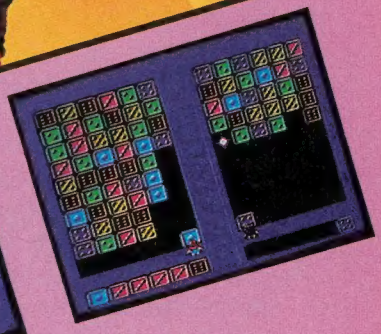
4 THE EDITOR'S VIEW
10 THE TIP SHEET
16 PLAYER'S WORLD
28 NINTENDO NEWS
34 GAME BOY PLAYERS
38 ARCADE ACTION
40 PC PLAYERS
43 SEGA PLAYERS
46 AMIGA PLAYERS
48 TURBO PLAYERS
51 ATARI SAFARI
52 NINTENDO GAME OF THE MONTH: *G.I. JOE*
58 SEGA GENESIS GAME OF THE MONTH: *STRIDER*
62 COMPUTER GAME OF THE MONTH: *KING'S QUEST V*
67-81 GAME REVIEWS:
MAGICIAN
BANDIT KINGS OF ANCIENT CHINA
BRAVOMAN
ROLLERGAMES
COUNTDOWN
ULTIMATE BASKETBALL
RISE OF THE DRAGON
PRINCESS TOMATO IN THE SALAD KINGDOM
M.U.S.H.A.
GAUNTLET II
GREMLINS 2
MUPPET ADVENTURE NO. 1
HAL WRESTLING
CHASE H.Q.
WRESTLEMANIA CHALLENGE
82 GUIDEPOST: THE HOT 100
88 GAME NEWS & PREVIEWS

HE WAS BORING BRAD...

UNTIL HE PLUGGED INTO PALAMEDES...

NOW BRAD'S BROKEN THE BOREDOM BARRIER!





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The EDITOR'S VIEW

By all accounts, Nintendo's new 16-bit videogame system — the Super Famicom — is an instant success. When the initial 300,000 units went on sale in Japan in late November, they sold out the first day. Reportedly, Nintendo is struggling to fill orders for an additional 1.5 million units.

That isn't surprising. Nor will anyone be surprised if the Super Famicom receives a similar welcome when it's released in the U.S., probably later this year. Even though Sega and NEC will have had a two-year head start by then, the success of the Super Famicom is almost universally taken for granted. Nintendo enjoys huge advantages, including an overwhelming (80-90 percent) share of the eight-bit videogame market, dozens of hit games that help sell the game machines, and seemingly unbeatable marketing savvy. Perhaps equally important, the Famicom boasts the most impressive, most powerful hardware specifications of the major consumer game systems.

But until now, the unknown factor was how well the Super Famicom would stack up *in actual game play* against its 16-bit rivals — the Sega Genesis and the NEC TurboGrafx-16. The Super Famicom has been preceded by more hype than anything else in the world of electronic gaming for the past five years. Can it possibly live up to expectations?

We've been playing with our own Super Famicom for some time now, and we thought you'd be interested in our first impressions. At this writing (mid-December), the only titles available are *Super Mario World* (the 16-bit sequel to the best-selling *Super Mario Bros.* series) and *F-Zero* (a futuristic car-racing game), so we can only offer impressions based on this small sample of games.

Is the Super Famicom a fantastic game system? Absolutely. But is it — as some have suggested — a revolutionary breakthrough that blows away everything else on the market? Not yet. These first two games are not worlds beyond the competition on Sega and NEC machines. Nonetheless, we've seen steady progress in the quality of Genesis and TurboGrafx titles over the past 18 months, and we expect similar improvement in future games for the Super Famicom.

These first games for the Super Famicom are evolutionary, not revolutionary. In other words, game play is a logical step up from the eight-bit Nintendo experience, but it's not a great leap forward that makes everything else obsolete. If you've ever played a Genesis or TurboGrafx, we don't think you're going to be stunned by these first games on the Super Famicom.

In terms of graphics, the Super Famicom does appear more colorful than the Genesis or TurboGrafx. And built-in rotation and scaling hardware results in some slick animation. (The final boss in *Super Mario World* is a good example.) But so far we haven't seen anything that couldn't be done as well or nearly as well on other 16-bit systems.

In terms of sound, we think these games reveal that the Super Famicom does enjoy a clear advantage over the Genesis and TurboGrafx. The background music is beautiful and the sound effects are startling. Also, the Super Famicom's controllers are a bit more versatile, thanks to extra buttons.

Although we were actually a little disappointed when we first started playing *Super Mario World*, we eventually changed our minds. Perhaps our expectations were too high: At first glance the screens didn't seem much different from the eight-bit *Super Mario* games. (This must have been partly intentional — Nintendo probably didn't want to change the look of this modern classic *too* radically.) However, after a few hours of game play with *Super Mario World*, the potential of the Super Famicom system became more evident. We began to appreciate the subtle animation and the impressive depth of this vast game. We now think *Super Mario World* is one of the best videogames we've ever played, even if the graphics didn't strike us blind on first playing.

Judging from these initial two games, Nintendo has introduced a superior game system but has not leapfrogged the competition. The difference between these early Super Famicom games and those sold for its 16-bit rivals is not as great as the difference between the 16-bit systems and the eight-bit NES.

The Super Famicom, however, has the *potential* to provide superior game play. The Super Famicom hardware is powerful and advanced: 2048 different colors can be on-screen at the same time (versus 16 on the NES, 64 on the Genesis, and 256 on the TurboGrafx); 512x448 pixel resolution for increased detail (versus 256x192 on the NES, 320x220 on the Genesis, and 320x224 on the TurboGrafx); near CD-quality sound; etc.

Perhaps, though, technology won't be the deciding factor in who wins the war of 16-bit game machines. As we've seen over the past five years, quality software and clever marketing are more likely to carry the day.

Tom R. Halfhill
Editor, *Game Player's*

GP

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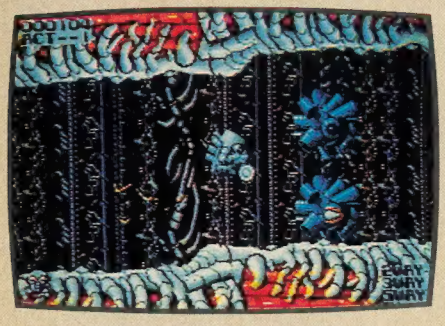

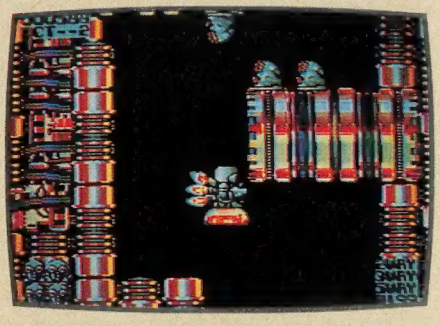

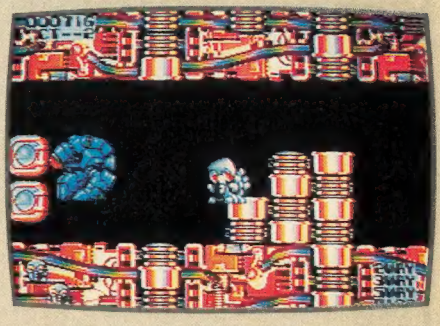

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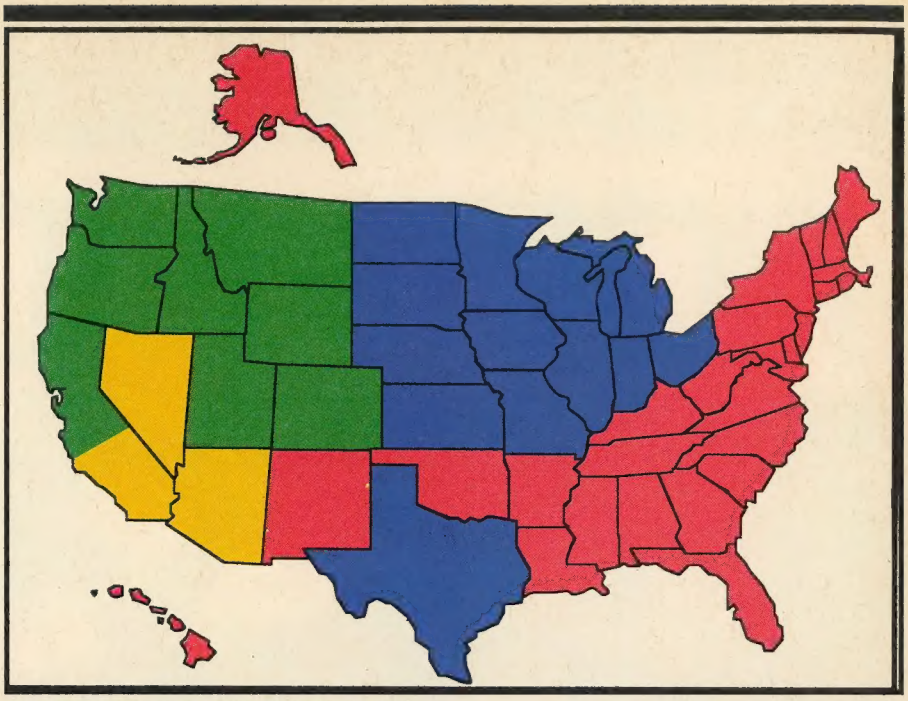

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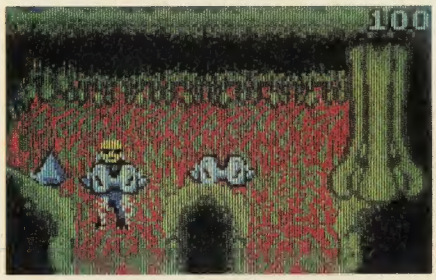
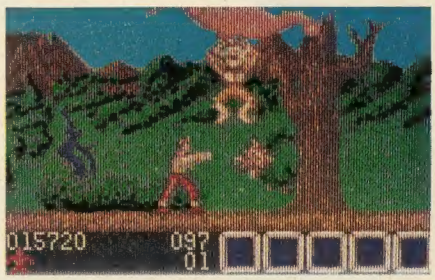
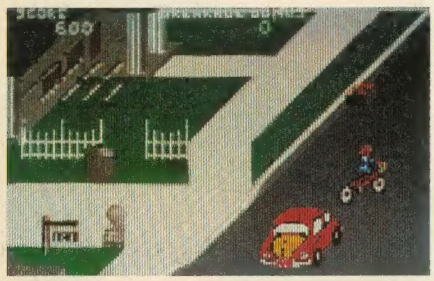
Why mow the lawn when you can bomb oncoming planes and destroy secret military bases in nine action missions with **BLUE LIGHTNING.**



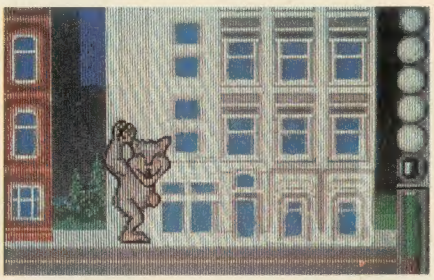
After dinner, you can always battle maggots, blood-flies and drools in the dangerous 8 player game – **SLIME WORLD.**



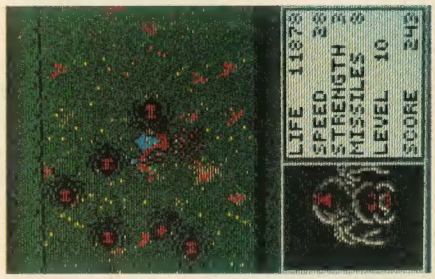
RYGAR, *the 2 player arcade hit that pits you against ferocious beasts, hideous demons or worse, your best friend.*



PAPERBOY. *Fling papers at non-subscribers, race your bicycle on people's lawns— in other words, the ultimate afterschool job.*



RAMPAGE. *Become a 60 ft. beast, demolish buildings and eat tanks as an army attempts to destroy you. Up to 4 players can take part in the destruction.*



Encounter loathsome beings. Escape from horrible creatures. It's you against the evil empire in the game of **GAUNTLET.**

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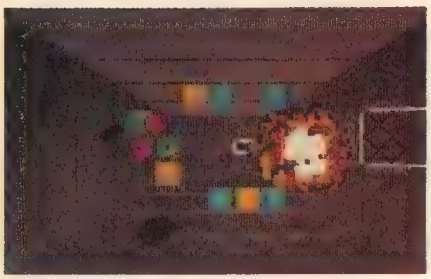
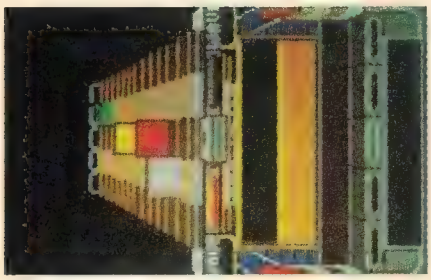


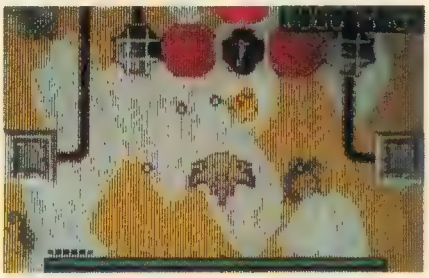
ROBO SQUASH. *The ultimate paddle game. The goal is to squash the enemy and line up four globes in a row to win. But be careful, three splats and you're out.*

XENOPHOBE. *Trapped in a space station, you must destroy the aliens. Side-scrolling adventure for up to 4 players.*



KLAX. *Maneuver your platform. Catch the falling bricks. Stack 'em for points. And try to do it all before your dad asks to borrow it.*

ROAD BLASTER. *Drive and avoid mines, exploding towers and enemy vehicles for points and make it through 50 levels. Great to play in the back of the car.*



It's a galactic shoot out between you and aliens in the 4 player game **ZARLOR MERCENARY.** *Your only hope is to kill them all or break for lunch.*

Help **MS. PACMAN** *escape the marauding ghosts by guiding her through multiple mazes gobbling up dots, energizers, fruits and pretzels.*

the Lynx lets you play arcade quality games that really look like arcade games. In 4 channel sound. Play by yourself. With one opponent. Two opponents. Three opponents. Or you can even link up with seven other players on certain games.

So if you don't already own a Lynx, you better hurry. Because they're going fast. And so are all these game cartridges.

Visit the videogame section in your favorite store now.

Before they're wiped out.

A ATARI LYNX™

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Super Mario Bros. 3

I'm having trouble with *Super Mario Bros. 3* for NES. I can't get past the last castle with Bowser! I've even looked in your issue of *Game Player's* that covered *Super Mario 3*! Please help me out.

Michael T. White
Ontario, Canada

To beat Bowser, wait for him to jump toward you. Move out of his way at the very last second — he lands so hard that he knocks out part of the floor. Lure him away from the hole he made and return to it once he's a safe distance away. He'll jump at you again, knocking out even more of the floor and enlarging the hole. Keep tricking him so he jumps into the hole, making it deeper and deeper until he eventually falls through.

TMNT: Fall of the Foot Clan

In *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Fall of the Foot Clan* for the Game Boy, there's a special bonus-round level-select. Go to the options screen, press and hold both A and Select, then press B. A question mark appears. When you press Start, you'll be able to select which game you want.

David Tekiela
Wisconsin

TIP SHEET

Do you have any questions about your favorite video-games or computer games? Or do you have any hints and tips to share with your fellow game players? If so, write to The Tip Sheet, Game Player's, P.O. Box 29364, Greensboro, NC 27429. Due to the volume of mail we receive, we regret that we cannot reply individually by mail to game questions.

There are a lot of interesting secrets in Fall of the Foot Clan. *For example, your turtle can regain all the power on his life line if you pause the game and use the control pad to enter this code: Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A. However, you can use this code only once during a game.*

There are also bonus stages hidden throughout the game. We know of three in level 1 alone.

Ghostbusters

In *Ghostbusters* for the Sega Genesis, how do you defeat the last boss ghost? I can't defeat him.

Jon Jacobsen
Bellevue, WA

When the ghost first appears, it's on a small hill and doesn't move around. Avoid its shots while aiming your missiles at its throbbing heart. Once the heart has been destroyed, the ghost starts moving. Now you can use the hill to your advantage. Lure the ghost to the left side of the screen, then dash under the ghost, jump on the hill, and shoot at the demon's head until it is destroyed.

Gold Rush

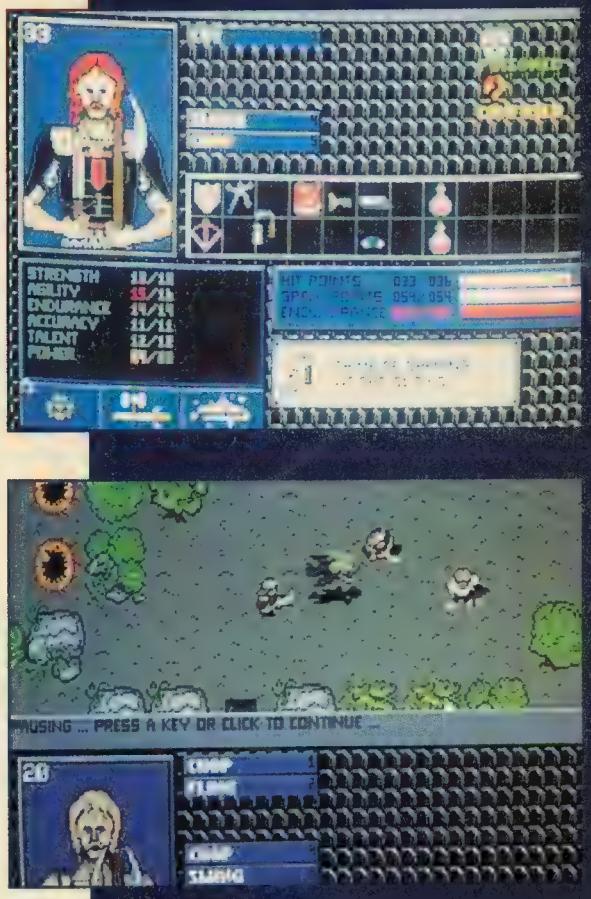
In *Gold Rush* for the PC, my lantern is always running out of oil. Where can I find some more? My friend managed to "run" to Jake. Now he is sitting around picking at dirt, but nothing happens. Do you have any advice for him?

David Zinkhon
Illinois

You're probably running out of oil because you're playing at the fast speed instead of the normal or slow speeds. Try slowing down the action and see if your oil doesn't last. You also can try blowing out the lantern when you don't need it, or substituting matches for occasional light.

If your friend can't find the Mother Lode, it's because he's running out of patience too soon. If he keeps picking at the exposed gold, he'll find riches beyond his wildest dreams.

DARKSPYRE™



Rising from the ashen soil of the Valley of Tears, Darkspyre tower spirals toward the heavens. Angered by the failures of the people they created, the Gods of the Three Ways — War, Magic and Intellect — built the granite monolith as a final test of mankind's worthiness to exist. The gods decreed that all would perish in a rain of fire and lightning unless a champion was able to overcome the trials of Darkspyre within 2000 years. Most of those years have passed, and even the great warrior Borel was unable to complete the quest. You are the last to enter Darkspyre.

- Real-time fantasy and role-playing. You never leave the main play screen to select weapons, cast spells or fight enemies.
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- An unbelievably realistic combat system where weapons break, armor wears and characters tire.
- An in-depth magic system that delivers five different classes — Sorcery, Wizardry, Healing, Conjuration and Enchantment — with graphic animation for each.
- More than 40 different creatures to encounter, including demons, the undead, elementals, deformed monsters and more.
- Easy-to-use graphic interface avoids lengthy menu selections or typed commands. Play with a keyboard, joystick or mouse!
- A full-length, professionally written novelette outlines the events leading up to your quest.

Software for your IBM, Tandy or compatible computer:
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R-Type

In *R-Type* for the NEC TurboGrafx-16, is there a way to increase the number of continues? Every time the game-over screen appears, it says "03" continues. The zero before the three probably means more continues are possible. How do you add more continues?

Robert Parlade
California

Hold down Select and buttons I and II — then watch your credits add up.

Destiny of an Emperor

I'm really stuck in *Destiny of an Emperor* for Nintendo. I can't seem to get Zhu Ge Liang to wake up and talk to me. Also, I have reached the point where further progress is impossible. How do I get into Liu Zheng's peaceful land of Shu?

John Winski
Alberta, Canada

You can't enter the land of Shu unless you have Zhu Ge Liang in your party. Go to his house and talk to the person there to find out where Zhu Ge Liang has gone. You'll have to follow him to several different cities before finally finding him back at his house. But don't wake him up — he's almost finished his nap. Wait patiently for a few seconds until he wakes up on his own.

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade

I'm having some trouble in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* for PCs. I have the book *Mein Kampf*, but what do I do with it?

Jason Chua
New Jersey

Your father is being held prisoner in Grunwald's Castle. You'll recognize the room where he's being held because it's wired to a security system. The guard in the security room is very intellectual. If you give him your copy of Mein Kampf, *he'll leave the room to read it and you can booby-trap the alarm.*

Phantasy Star

In *Phantasy Star* for the Sega Master System, there is a building on the ice planet with nothing but zombies in it and a Dezorian at the beginning. We've spent a couple of days in the building and believe the shield is there, but we can't retrieve it. Otherwise, we have everything else.

Mike, Nancy, and the kids
Wisconsin

If you're referring to the Mirror Shield, the Denzorians have lied to you about its location. You'll find it buried at the center of a small island in the middle of a lake on Motavia (the desert planet). You can't reach the island without a hovercraft, and you can't move onto the island without a land rover. But once you've got the shield, you're ready to destroy Medusa on Palma!

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

How do you get a rope in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* for Nintendo?

Eddie Conner
Kentucky

On the map screen, you'll notice there are certain buildings you have to search to complete the game. But there are other buildings you don't *have to search. If you want a rope, you need to go into some of those buildings and look for the rope icon.*

GP

THESE PIRATES HAVE TONGUES AS SHARP AS THEIR SWORDS.

Lucasfilm™ Games' swashbuckling new graphic adventure lets you trade insults with some of the saltiest seamen to ever sail the seven seas.

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Being the easy-going types they are, your new pirate pals invite you into the club. Just as soon as you've completed three *tiny* trials.

Among other things, you'll need to sedate some piranha poodles, burglarize the governor's mansion, and do business with the scum of the earth. And if that's not enough, you'll have to figure out whether the 300-pound voodoo priestess covets your rubber chicken, fetid fish, pack of breath mints, or...

If the brigands don't grab you, the graphics will.

Lucasfilm Games set today's graphic standards with games like *Loom* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Now *The Secret of Monkey Island* ups the standards a few more notches with stunning 256-color VGA graphics (16-color EGA version also available), proportionally scaled animated characters, and cinematic pans and camera angles.

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MONKEY ISLAND TREASURE HUNT CONTEST

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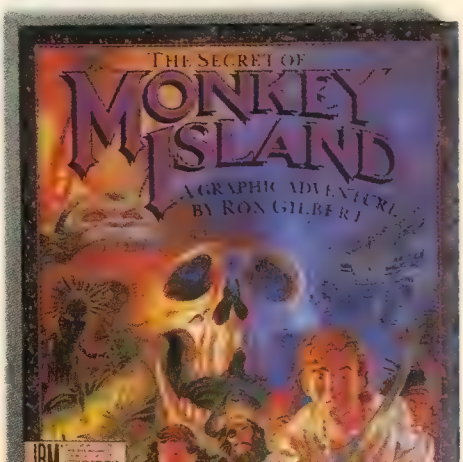

The Secret of Monkey Island is available for IBM and 100% compatibles in 16-color EGA and 256-color VGA versions. Visit your retailer or order directly with Visa/MC by calling 1-800-STARWARS (in Canada 1-800-828-7927). ™ and © 1990, LucasArts Entertainment Company. All rights reserved. IBM is a trademark of International Business Machines, Inc. 3M is a trademark of 3M Corp. AdLib is a trademark of AdLib, Inc. Cruise prize arranged with the "Fun Ships" of Carnival Cruise Lines, The Most Popular Cruise Line In The World; ship's registry: Bahamas and Liberia.

IT'S EASY TO BEAT THE COMPETITION

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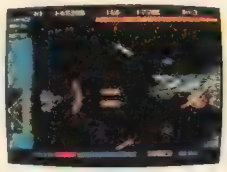
1 
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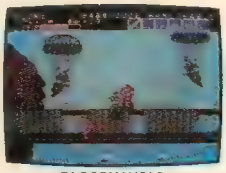
2 
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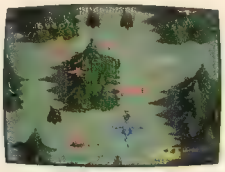
3 
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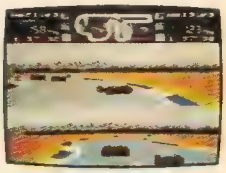
4 
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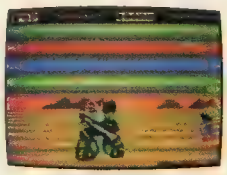
9 
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SPLATTERHOUSE

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VIGILANTE

SPORTS

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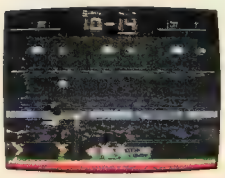
16 
SUPER VOLLEYBALL

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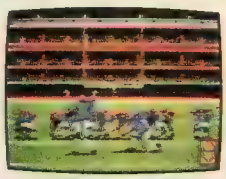
TAKIN' IT TO THE HOOP

18 
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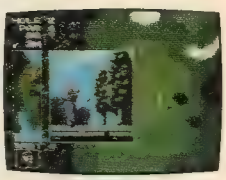
19 
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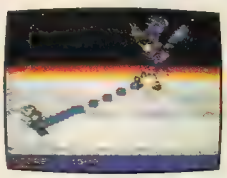
24 
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CHINA WARRIOR

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CRATERMAZE

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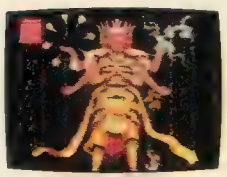
31 
NINJA SPIRIT

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PAC-LAND

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TIGER ROAD

SHOOTING

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BLAZING LAZERS

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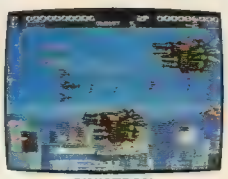
PSYCHOSIS

40 
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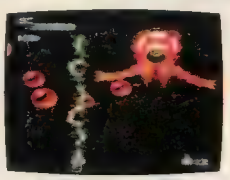
41 
SUPER STAR SOLDIER*

42

ROLEPLAY

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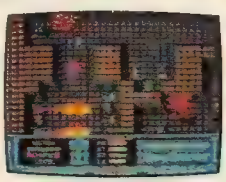
DOUBLE DUNGEONS

47 
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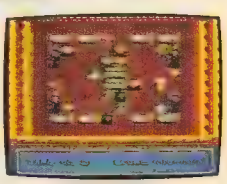
FAMILY

49 
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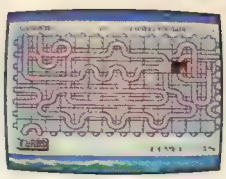
54 
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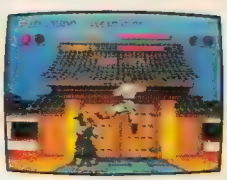
55 
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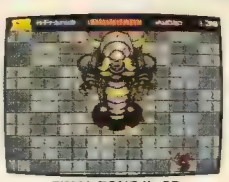
56 
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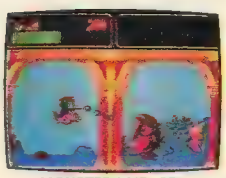
60 
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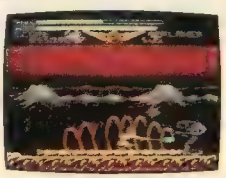
61 
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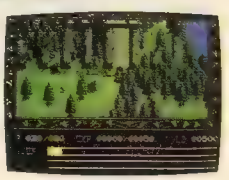
62 
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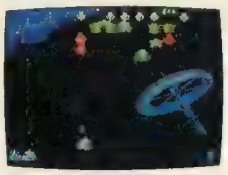
WHEN YOU'VE GOT THEM OUTNUMBERED.

5 
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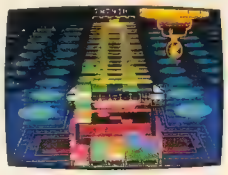
6 
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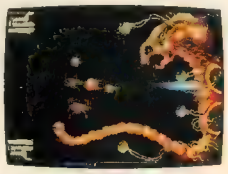
7 
R-TYPE

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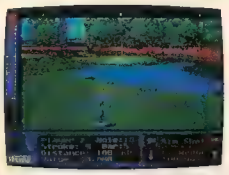
SIDEARMS

BATTLE ROYALE

13 
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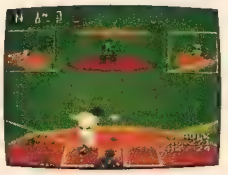
14 
WORLD CLASS BASEBALL

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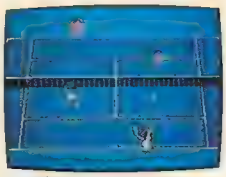
SONIC SPIKE

DRIVING

20 
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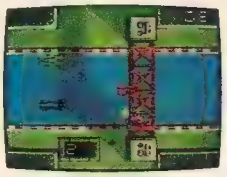
21 
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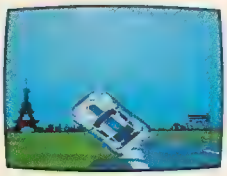
22 
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ACTION

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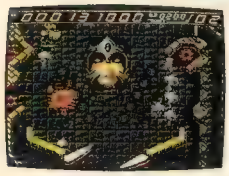
ALIEN CRUSH


DEVIL'S CRUSH

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DRAGON'S CURSE

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DROP OFF

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J.J. AND JEFF

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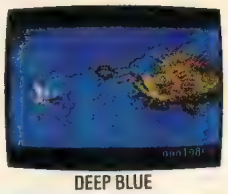
CYBERCORE

36 
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FANTASY ZONE

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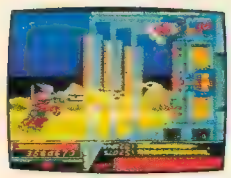
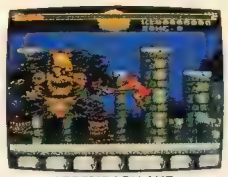
ORDYNE

ADVENTURE


VEIGUES

43
BONK'S ADVENTURE

44 
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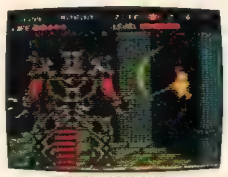
45 
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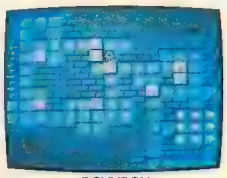
50 
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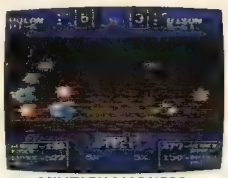
53 
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JACK NICKLAUS TURBO GOLF-CD

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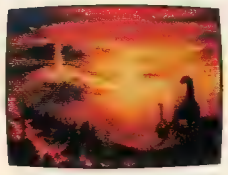
LAST ALERT-CD

59 
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HUNDREDS CHEER FINAL WINNERS AT NINTENDO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Noreen Lovoi and Tom R. Halfhill

If you've ever wondered who the world's best Nintendo players are, wonder no longer. As hundreds of spectators and family members cheered them on, three winners emerged from a group of 90 finalists at the Nintendo World Championship in California last December.

The first-ever Nintendo world champions are Jeff Hansen, age 10, of Salt Lake City, Utah (11-and-under category); Thor Aackerlund, age 13, of Carrollton, Texas (12-to-17 category); and Robert Whiteman, age 18, of Denville, New Jersey (18-and-over category). Each champion won a 1991 Geo LSi convertible, a $10,000 U.S. savings bond, and a large-screen TV worth about $4,000.

In addition to the champions, there were also 18 runners-up (six from each age group) who each won a $1,000 savings bond. All of the other finalists received a Panasonic portable stereo worth about $200. The three top runners-up were Adam Misoky, age 8, of Concord, Ohio (11-and-under category); Rich Ambler, age 16, of Madison, Wisconsin (12-to-17 category); and Marcelo Gonzalez, age 25, of Friendswood, Texas (18-and-over category).

The championship, originally scheduled to be held in Orlando, Florida, was moved at the last minute to Hollywood, California. The 90 finalists were selected at regional contests held in 30 cities across the U.S. between March and December. Part of their prize for winning the regionals was a free trip to the finals, along with one family member each. Most of them brought even more relatives, however, packing the crowd with enthusiastic cheering sections for each player.

There were also a number of celebrities on hand, including Nintendo game wizard Howard Phillips; *Growing Pains* star Jeremy Miller; Candace Cameron and Jodi Sweeton of *Full House*; Nell Carter of *You Take the Kids*; and Sage Stallone (Sly's son) of *Rocky V*.

The finalists were an amazingly diverse group. The youngest was age 7 and the oldest was 42. Among them were a couple of husband-wife and father-son pairs.

All of the finalists arrived in Hollywood on December 7. Over the next three days, they went through orientation, rehearsals, and practice sessions, and were interviewed by journalists. The actual championship took place on December 9 in the Star Trek Theatre at Universal Studios.

The scene was pure Hollywood

(continued on page 18...)

PHOTO BY CHRIS HUNTER

From left: William B. White, Jr., Nintendo of America; Robert Whiteman, 18-and-over champion; Jeff Hansen, 11-and-under champion; Thor Aackerlund, 12-to-17 champion; Howard Phillips, Nintendo of America.

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— lights, cameras, and plenty of action. With background music pounding, the finalists were introduced to the screaming audience as they ran from the back of the auditorium to the stage. After a rousing chorus of "We Are the Champions," the 18-and-over contestants took their places at 30 monitors surrounding the base of the stage. With thousands of dollars' worth of prizes at stake, the tension crackled throughout the theater.

As in the regional playoffs, the finalists played a special triathalon version of *Super Mario Bros.*, *Rad Racer*, and *Tetris*. The first elimination round narrowed the 30 finalists in each age group down to seven top scorers. A second round narrowed these seven down to a pair of contenders, who then faced off for the crown.

The highest scorer among the champions was Aackerlund, who finished with 2,809,995 points. Aackerlund's mother, father, and brother Erik — himself a finalist in the 18-and-over group — were all there to celebrate his victory. Aackerlund said he would donate some of his winnings to charity.

Hansen, champion of the 11-and-under group, was the next-highest scorer among the three top winners. After racking up 2,009,950 points to take the crown, Hansen was left speechless. But when host Terry Lee Torok asked Hansen's father if he'll leave the Geo convertible in the garage until his son is old enough to drive, Mr. Hansen replied, "Not a chance!"

Whiteman, who won the 18-and-over category with 1,956,960 points, was also taken aback by his hard-fought victory. When asked how he felt after winning, Whiteman said, "I don't feel anything — I'm exhausted."

PHOTO BY CHRIS HUNTER

Thirty finalists prepare to face off in the first elimination round.

Finalists (11 and Under)

Justin Grant, 10, Phoenix, Arizona
Al Paugn Kanan, 11, North Hollywood, California
Christopher Vu, 9, San Jose, California
Michael Scott, 10, Corona, California
Dustin Durham, 10, Denver, Colorado
Nicholas Weiler, 7, Denver, Colorado
Randi Napier, 11, Lexington, Kentucky
Johnny Crosby, 11, Metairie, Louisiana
Bradley Brunet, 8, New Orleans, Louisiana
Dave Moreton, 10, Lynnfield, Massachusetts
Shaun Joyce, 11, Dearborn, Michigan
Andrew Luers, 10, Eden Prairie, Minnesota
Jeremy Tomashek, 10, St. Louis, Missouri
Michael Alex, 10, Bayside, New York
Jared Cohen, 11, Yonkers, New York
Mike Trogden, 10, Mt. Vernon, Ohio
Adam Misoky, 8, Concord, Ohio
Shannon Gresh, 11, Seville, Ohio
Dallas Lang, 10, Oak Grove, Oregon
Paul Lee, 10, Perkasia, Pennsylvania
Peter Carter, 10, Garfield, Texas
Heather Martin, 11, Allen, Texas
Long Khuu, 9, Houston, Texas
Heeth Kell, 10, Todele, Utah
Jeremy Wall, 9, Bennington, Vermont
Reid Somori, 8, Virginia Beach, Virginia
John Yandle, 11, Virginia Beach, Virginia
Jacob Winch, 9, Mazomanie, Wisconsin
Jason Brandos, 11, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Finalists (12 to 17)

Alan Hong, 16, San Diego, California
Chris Tang, 14, Mountain View, California
Chris McCormick, 13, Surrey, British Columbia
Mark Cabanayan, 14, Waukegan, Illinois
Jeff Falco, 14, Berwyn, Illinois
Tim Drews, 13, Berwyn, Illinois
Jeff Brearly, 14, Indianapolis, Indiana
Daniel Raymond, 14, Ypsilanti, Michigan
John Wyman, 13, Milan, Michigan
Curt Thorn, 15, St. Ignace, Michigan
Shannon Webster, 14, Kearny, Nebraska
Jason Orlando, 14, Lambertville, New Jersey
David Lopez, 14, Union City, New Jersey
Rob Bianco, 16, Staten Island, New York
Eric Trinagel, 14, Huntington, New York
Kenny Welch, 12, Cincinnati, Ohio
Nick Wietlisback, 15, Cincinnati, Ohio
Steven Gingerich, 13, Springboro, Ohio
Phil Evans, 16, Mogadore, Ohio
Mike Winzinek, 17, Canton, Ohio
Kevin Gilley, 16, Bethany, Oklahoma
Robin Mihara, 13, Portland, Oregon
Josh Caracicio, 12, Norristown, Pennsylvania
Paul Williams, 14, Friendswood, Texas
Jeff Baker, 17, Eulees, Texas
Jeff Bender, 15, Plano, Texas
Justin Ellstrom, 12, Seattle, Washington
Mike Strickett, 13, Lacy, Washington
Rich Ambler, 16, Madison, Wisconsin

Finalists (18 and Over)

Richard Watson, 22, Phoenix, Arizona
Colleen Cardas, 24, Ontario, California
Michael Pirring, 25, San Francisco, California
Grant Nakata, 19, Huntington Beach, California
Eden Stamm, 18, Surrey, British Columbia
Rob Minasian, 20, Boca Raton, Florida
Donna Thomas, 30, Gurnee, Illinois
Alan Vonatu, 29, Shawnee, Kansas
Mike Ferranti, 36, Wilbraham, Massachusetts
Steve Factor, 19, Malden, Massachusetts
Pat Kensicki, 29, Warren, Michigan
Chris Dillard, 22, Detroit, Michigan
Kevin Papke, 19, Livonia, Michigan
Mike Iarossi, 19, Garfield, New Jersey
Bruce Trogden, 34, Mt. Vernon, Ohio
Dario Tankosic, Parma, Ohio
Pete Florez, 19, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Chris Holt, 20, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Vince Kailis, 24, North Wales, Pennsylvania
Erik Aackerlund, 18, Carrollton, Texas
Ray White, 18, Dallas, Texas
Bob Bender, 42, Plano, Texas
Marcelo Gonzalez, 25, Friendswood, Texas
David Jachmann, 18, Salt Lake City, Utah
John Yates, 19, Virginia Beach, Virginia
Cassandra Ross, 24, Chesapeake, Virginia
Joe Somori, 32, Virginia Beach, Virginia
Tim Ross, 36, Chesapeake, Virginia
Jason Haag, Mazomanie, Wisconsin

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FINAL ZONE

You are about to be transported 100 years in the future, where the latest wave in warfare is the New Age Power-Suit, or NAP - a robotic combat machine which gives the wearer unheard-of fighting ability. Your NAP can be equipped with up to 15 weapon, speed, and maneuverability options, out of 100 available - including flame throwers, land mines, and both hand-held and body-mounted firing equipment. With this kind of firepower to command, your only limitation will be your own strategic sense and combat savvy. The ultimate battlefield - the FINAL ZONE - awaits you!

Granada

The Strategic Defense Initiative of the 1990's banned ICBMs and nuclear warheads. Now, in 2016, weapons are limited to super strategic mobile weapons. Enter Granada. Hypertek-Cannon Tank (HTC). Granada uses shields and radar to create its defense mechanism. Offensive firepower is provided by the most awesome array of weaponry ever assembled on a battlefield. These include multi-directional interceptors, long-range homing missiles, and a device designed to totally obliterate all opposing forces. You will command Granada through the streets of Tobora, to battle the giant flying batteship Astarsha, and Valsic, another HTC.

WHIP RUSH

In the 22nd century, Earth Defense Headquarters detected a huge unidentified object approaching our system. A probe revealed three of our own Alpha-type robot spaceshops at its core. In the hands of a hostile alien intelligence, the ships had been transformed into a gigantic, heavily-armed, flying fortress - bent on destroying Earth! The defenses of Earth have all failed to halt the juggernaut. In a final desperate bid for survival, all resources have been expended to create one mighty jet fighter: Whip Rush. You must pilot Whip Rush on a noble mission to deliver mankind from certain doom!

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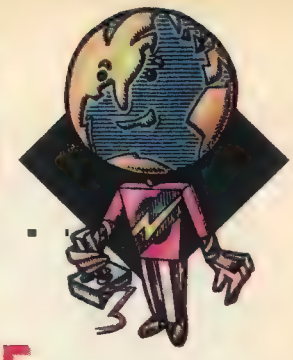
PLAYERS WORLD



BRINGING THE ARCADE HOME

Tom R. Halfhill and Tony Takoushi

What's more fun than dropping a quarter into the slot and playing a videogame at your local arcade? How about playing an arcade game at home without spending a quarter!

Ever since videogames were born nearly 20 years ago as coin-operated arcade machines, addicted gamers have been trying to re-create the arcade experience in the comfort of their own homes. In 1989, Sega and NEC made a serious attempt by introducing the first home videogame systems with 16-bit computer technology. The Sega Genesis and NEC TurboGrafx-16 come quite close to arcade quality — as close as is possible with today's technology at affordable prices. But the most avid gamers still want more.

Of course, you can always go out and buy a real arcade machine. But they cost a few thousand dollars apiece, and you'd have to buy a new machine whenever you got tired of the game and wanted to play something new.

Over the past few months, however, three interesting alternatives have popped up. All of them seek to re-create the experience of arcade play at home — and all of them succeed to a large extent. They're not inexpensive, but they're cheaper than buying real arcade machines.

The G.A.M.E.

This well-engineered product is basically a stand-up cabinet and seat that takes your Nintendo Entertainment System, Sega Genesis, or NEC TurboGrafx-16 and adds arcade-quality video and sound reproduction. It also puts heavy-duty, arcade-quality controls at your fingertips.

Since it works with ordinary home videogame systems, the G.A.M.E. does not offer true arcade-quality graphics and sound. But it's surprising what a difference high-fidelity sound and video can make. Even after several months of testing here at Game Player's, we still find the G.A.M.E. breathtaking.

To simulate the arcade experience, the G.A.M.E. cabinet contains a 25-inch color video monitor, a 20-watt stereo sound system with top-mounted speakers, and a separate 40-watt amplifier that drives a subwoofer hidden beneath the padded seat. On the front panel are two joysticks and 12 buttons (six for each player), plus a volume control.

The video monitor uses special RGB (red-green-blue) connections, like most personal computers. As a result, the picture quality is stunning — you won't believe you're looking at the same graphics you've seen on your TV. Sega Genesis graphics in particular really come alive on this big screen.

Likewise, the pumped-up sound effects will literally shake your walls. The subwoofer in the seat produces very deep bass that rumbles like thunder.

The G.A.M.E. is manufactured by Arcade Masters (Cromwell, Connecticut) and costs about $2,400. It comes with one module for hooking up an NES. Additional modules ($50 to $80) are required if you want to plug in a Genesis or TurboGrafx. In addition, you can hook up a VCR to the G.A.M.E. and watch TV on the 25-inch screen, or connect a stereo to the G.A.M.E.'s sound system.

The G.A.M.E.

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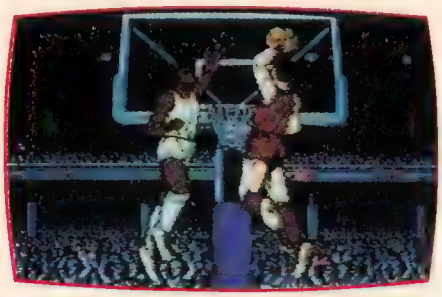
Want close ups? Go for the slam or a 3-pointer and let the full-screen animation blow you away!
When your men start to drag, you can substitute some fresh blood.
It's all jam packed into one NES cartridge, pro-basketball at your fingertips!



Zoom into the action

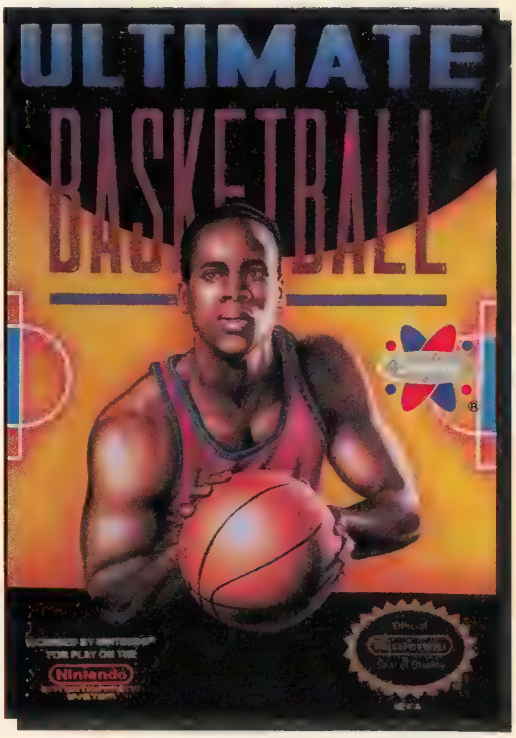
Be a part of the action–not just a spectator

See your shots–up close and personal

You control full court movement

Pick your starting line-up

Team up with a friend against the computer



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If you demand nothing less than true arcade-quality game play, you can also buy a module that allows you to hook up a Neo-Geo to the G.A.M.E. This would give you the best of both worlds — real arcade graphics and sound coupled with arcade-quality audio-video.

Neo-Geo

This impressive system was covered in detail in the November 1990 issue of *Game Player's*. Designed by SNK, a Nintendo game publisher based in Japan, the Neo-Geo is the first true arcade machine to be repackaged and sold as a home videogame system.

The home version of the Neo-Geo is functionally identical to the arcade machine. There's no coin slot, of course, and the machine has been cosmetically redesigned as a tabletop console with plug-in controllers. Other than that, the Neo-Geo is authentic arcade.

Although it's based on the same 16-bit technology as the Sega Genesis, the Neo-Geo has more powerful video chips for superior graphics. The Neo-Geo's sound capabilities are exceptional, too.

More revealing is the memory capacity of the Neo-Geo's game cartridges. On the NES, the biggest games (such as *Super Mario Bros. 3*) have about three megabits of memory. On the Genesis, the largest game released so far is *Strider* with eight megabits. But Neo-Geo games routinely have 46 to 62 megabits, and the carts can hold up to 330 megabits. That extra memory translates into potential for vast games with high-quality graphics and sound.

The Neo-Geo

Naturally, all this power comes at a price. In the U.S., the Neo-Geo console with two controllers and one game is priced at $549, and games cost $199 each. (Prices are even higher overseas.) Because of this, SNK is offering the Neo-Geo for rental through video stores.

To truly duplicate the arcade experience, the Neo-Geo should be hooked up to a high-quality monitor and sound system. The Neo-Geo's advantages are diluted somewhat when it's played through an ordinary TV.

The Powarcade

This unusual system, so far available only in Europe, is something of a cross between the G.A.M.E. and the Neo-Geo. Made in Great Britain by Active Consoles and Silverline, the Powarcade is a stand-up cabinet with its own electronics, controllers, and power supply. You add the video screen, which can be any computer monitor or TV that fits on the cabinet's 23-inch-wide adjustable shelf.

Inside the Powarcade are electronics which adhere to a coin-op standard known as *Jamma*. Basically, it allows different arcade games to be installed on plug-in circuit boards, much like the cartridges that plug into home videogame consoles. Hundreds of arcade games use the Jamma standard, including *R-Type, Double Dragon, Altered Beast, Ghouls 'n' Ghosts, Strider,* and *Michael Jackson's Moonwalker*. All of these titles and many more are compatible with the Powarcade.

New games can be installed quite easily by releasing a few latches, flipping open the control panel, and plugging the circuit board into the Jamma edge connector. The Powarcade cabinet is solidly built with arcade-quality controllers, and there's a credit button where you'd normally find the coin slot.

The Powarcade

In Great Britain, the Powarcade is priced at 299 pounds (about $590 US), including delivery to your door. Games cost 50 to 300 pounds ($90-$590), depending on demand — the latest hits cost the most. Active is planning to start a club with special discounts, rentals, and a buy-back option.

If it catches on in Great Britain, the Powarcade (or something similar) will probably show up in North America and Japan as well. The quest for arcade-quality videogames seems to be something that game players the world over have in common.

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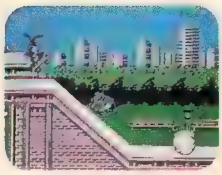
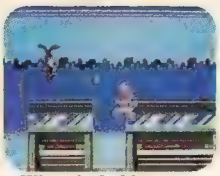
Use your pizza crusher to put out FireballMan.



In Central Park, skateboard over bad guys and gain magic powers.



When the IceMan comes, don't slip-up on your yo-yo bonking.

Yo! New York City's been overrun by a bunch of really bad guys. And you've got to stop them. How? Just bonk them a lot with your yo-yo. Or, out-chomp them in the pizza eating contests.

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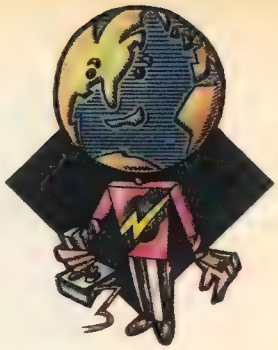


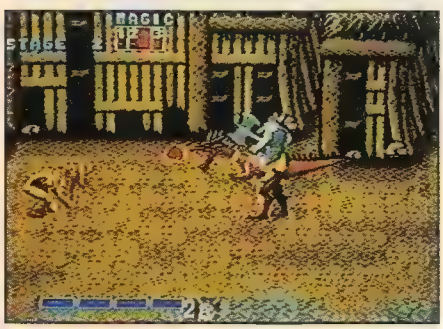
FACE TO FACE...WITH R.J. WILLIAMS

Jason R. Rich

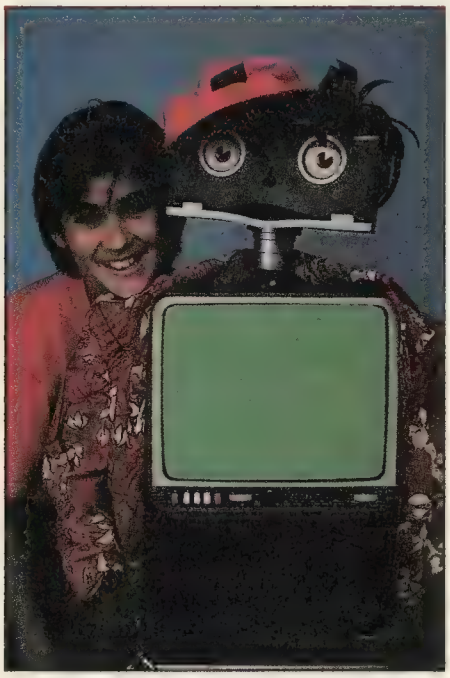
For a 14-year-old boy, R.J. Williams manages to keep himself extremely busy. He currently has a recurring role as "Rowdy" on ABC's *General Hospital* and another role as the newspaper boy who's dating "D.J." on ABC's *Full House*. In addition, he performs the voices for several cartoon characters on *Gummy Bears*, *TaleSpin*, and two other animated TV series, *and* he hosts the early-morning TV show *Wake, Rattle & Roll*!

When he's not working, R.J. goes to school, plays several sports, and enjoys videogames. In fact, he now owns just about every major home videogame system on the market — including the Nintendo Entertainment System, Sega Genesis, Sega Master System, Atari Lynx, Nintendo Game Boy, ColecoVision, Astrocade, and two Atari computers.

"Videogames are my favorite thing to do during my free time," explains R.J. "For the Nintendo Entertainment System, I have something like 80 games. But Genesis is my favorite system because the graphics are superior. I like the 16-bit machines.



Golden Axe is R.J.'s favorite Sega Genesis game.



Among his many other screen credits, R.J. Williams is the host of *Wake, Rattle & Roll*, seen every weekday morning.

"My favorite Genesis game is *Golden Axe*," adds R.J., "because it is just like in the arcade. I can't wait to play some of the newer games, like *Michael Jackson's Moonwalker* and *Joe Montana Football*. I'm like a sports game fanatic!"

R.J. has a few hints for fellow Genesis gamers. When playing *Golden Axe* by yourself, pick the two-player option and then quickly kill off the second player. This trick gives you two extra continues. "This will definitely help anyone beat the game," he says.

"On *Revenge of Shinobi*," he adds, "at the title screen, when selecting the number of throwing stars, select zero and hold it there for 25 seconds. This will give you unlimited throwing stars."

When shopping for new videogames, R.J. says he prefers the ones with excellent graphics and sound. And because he beats the games so quickly, he has to buy a lot of them.

"Most games I can beat in one day or less," he says. "I beat *Mega Man 2* in about one hour on the NES. The games where I can use the continue feature, I usually finish very quickly. *Lolo 2* is the hardest NES game I have played."

As the host of *Wake, Rattle & Roll*, R.J. appears on TV every weekday morning. The show features live-action segments mixed with original cartoons and animatronic characters. R.J. says that one of his favorite parts of the show is the People Processor, which allows him to bring people or objects back from the past. He also likes the Living Library segment, in which he enters the world of a storybook. "There are a lot of fantastic inventions which I get to use on the show."

GP

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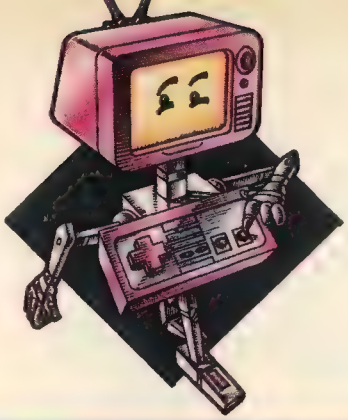


NINTENDO NEWS

Games and More Games for '91

Jeff Lundrigan

Lucasfilm Games consistently produces some of the most entertaining computer games available today. Since Lucasfilm first started making games in 1982, it has released a string of excellent titles, including *Secret of Monkey Island, The Battle of Britain, Loom,* and *Maniac Mansion.* Now Lucasfilm has reached an agreement with JVC to design and release more titles for Nintendo.

The first of these is *Star Wars,* an action-strategy game based on the hit movie of 1977. *Star Wars* combines a number of different playfield perspectives in a single game: You begin on Tatooine with a top-to-bottom scrolling stage, dodging boulders and blasting Jawas in Luke Skywalker's landspeeder. This is followed by side-to-side scrolling in the Mos Eisley spaceport. Then you experience a first-person, in-the-cockpit perspective as you pilot the *Millennium Falcon.* The game continues, closely following the storyline of the original movie. Perspectives continue to shift throughout the game, adding to the excitement.

Players can also switch between the different *Star Wars* characters. All of the "good guys" are represented—including Luke, Han Solo, and Princess Leia—and each has different skills and abilities. You can then select which character you want to control during a given stage, depending on which one best handles a given situation.

This level of complexity certainly sounds ambitious for an NES game, but considering Lucasfilm's generally high quality, *Star Wars* should be excellent.

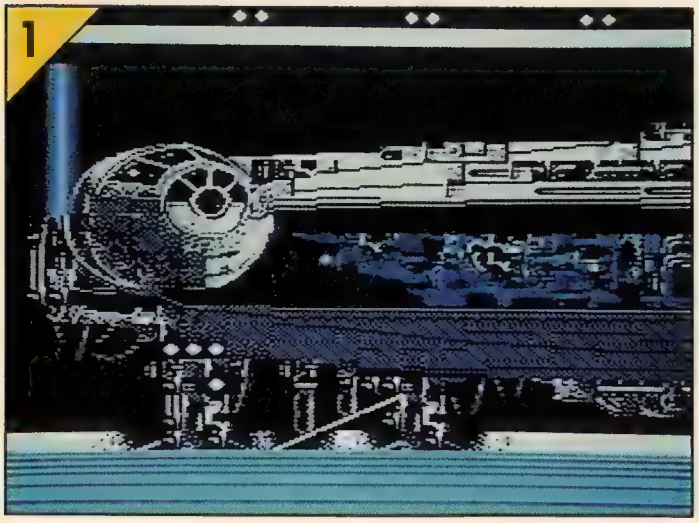
Winter CES

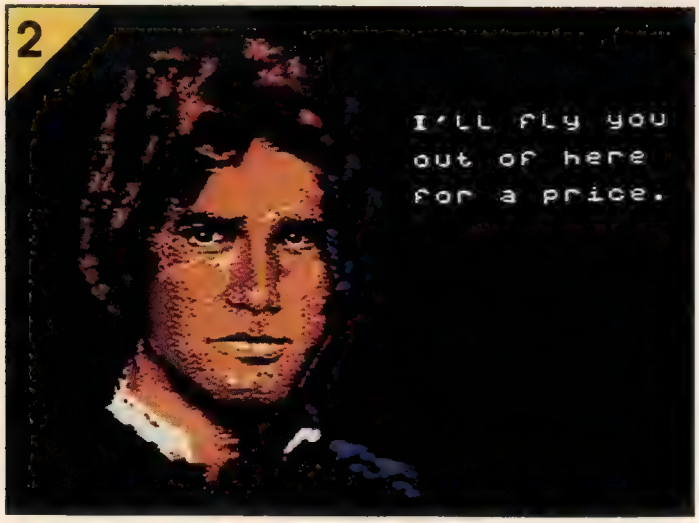
Star Wars isn't the only new title that Nintendo players can look forward to this year. Dozens of new games were scheduled to be announced at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January. We'll bring you a more detailed report next issue, but here's a preview of coming attractions.

Accolade will release *The Game of Harmony* for the Game Boy, an adaptation of the computer game of the same title. The goal in this game is to *prevent* things from exploding by moving them into "harmonious conjunction." Another nonviolent game, *Monopoly,* from Parker Brothers, is based on

1 Lucasfilm's computer games have always been known for their excellent graphics, and this screen from the Nintendo version of *Star Wars* indicates that Lucasfilm's NES games won't be an exception.

2 The characters in the NES version of *Star Wars* will be familiar to anyone who enjoyed the movies.





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NINTENDO NEWS

the classic board game.

Don't worry about traditional arcade action — there's plenty of that, too, including three new titles from Activision: *Swordmaster*, a seven-level medieval action game; *Die Hard*, based on the hit movie; and *Ultimate Air Combat*.

Also pulled from the silver screen is *Robocop II* from Data East. In addition, Data East will update an arcade classic with *Burgertime Deluxe* for the Game Boy, and try to show that "Bo knows Nintendo" with *Bo Jackson Baseball* for the NES.

HAL America, apparently pleased with the success of the *Lolo* series, is continuing the saga with *Lolo 3*. Another game, *DayDreaming Davey*, is based on an entirely new character who travels through time while snoozing. HAL America also adds to the growing number of pinball adventures with *Rollerball*.

SNK will introduce *Dexterity: The Misadventures of Dexter Doolittle*, and is still planning to release *Ikari Warriors III — The Rescue*.

Among the other sequels we can expect this year are Square Soft's *Final Fantasy II*, and — sure to be good news to giant-monster fans — *Godzilla II* from Toho.

For the Younger Set

Younger game players and their parents are likely to be pleased with their selection of cartridges in 1991. Capcom, which released *Chip 'n Dale's Rescue Rangers*, is continuing to expand its list of Disney-based titles for the NES with the upcoming *Talespin*, based on the syndicated TV show.

A few companies are releasing games that will not only appeal to younger players, but will help instruct them as well. GameTek is producing titles in cooperation with Fisher Price, including *Firehouse Rescue*, *Perfect Fit*, and *I Can Remember*, while Hi-Tech Expressions offers *Sesame Street A-B-C*, *Sesame Street 1-2-3*, and *Count's Counting*. Other titles for younger children from Hi-Tech Expressions are *Tom & Jerry* for both the NES and Game Boy, and *Dungeons and Ducks* (starring Daffy Duck) for the Game Boy.

Older players shouldn't worry that they're being left out, however. GameTek is also developing *American Gladiators*, based on the hit TV show, and Hi-Tech Expressions is working on *Barbie*, based on the popular doll. Another NES game from Hi-Tech Expressions is *Twin Peaks*.

New from Jaleco USA are several action-strategy games, including *Totally Rad*, where players use magic to change shape and fight enemies; *War on Wheels*, a roller derby game; *Metal Mech*, a post-World War III adventure; and *The Last Ninja*, in which a ninth-century ninja finds himself in 20th-century New York.

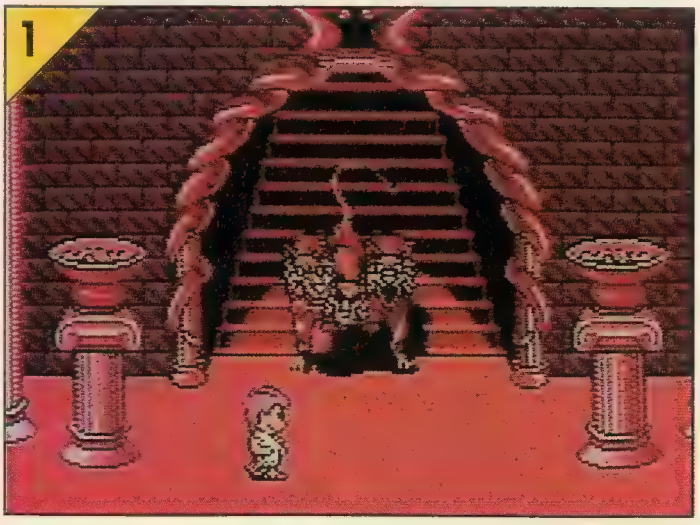
SOFEL is following up *Casino Kid* with *Wall Street Kid*, which tests your financial ingenuity. Also forthcoming from SOFEL are *Happily Ever After*, an adventure starring Snow White (based on an upcoming film of the same name); and *Klashball*, a sports game combining elements of soccer, basketball, and hockey.

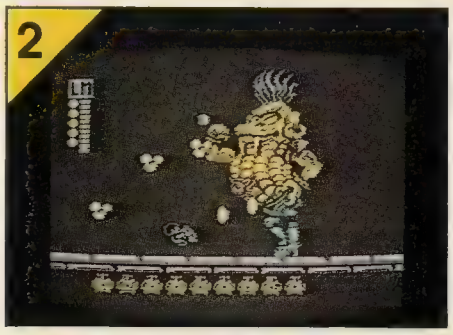
Natsume has a couple of new titles in the offing — *Shadow of the Ninja*, set in 21st-century New York; and *S.C.A.T* (Special Cyber-

1 HAL America's *DayDreaming Davey* travels through time and space in his own mind.

2 *Totally Rad*, from Jaleco, is an action game with shape-changing heroes and bizarre enemies.

3 Fans of Seika's *Shadowgate* may want to watch for *Deja Vu*, a mystery-adventure based on the computer game.





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NINTENDO NEWS

netic Attack Team), an action game that pits half-human, half-machine heroes against alien invaders.

Romstar will release NES versions of two arcade games: *Twin Eagle* and *Rally Bike*. Other Romstar games for '91 include a new Mr. Chin action puzzle, *Thunder and Lightning*, as well as *World Bowling* for the Game Boy and *Championship Bowling* for the NES. (Neither of these games should be confused with *World Champ*, a boxing game for the NES.)

RPG Treasures

Role-playing adventures continue to be well-represented in 1991, with several new titles. Seika, apparently pleased with the success of *Shadowgate*, will release *Deja Vu*, a mystery-adventure adapted from a popular computer game. *Deja Vu* will feature a user interface that's similar to the one in *Shadowgate*. Another new Seika title is *Uninvited*, an adventure set in a modern-day mansion that pits you against an evil sorcerer.

Mariner's Run from Vic Tokai, a game in the style of *Ultima* or *Dragon Warrior*, takes place in a land of seafaring towns. Vic Tokai has also planned a number of action titles for '91, including *Counterstroke*, set on a future Earth plagued by mutant criminals; *Krion Conquest*, where the fate of the world rests on finding the witch Francesca; and *Crystal Passage*, in which players in search of fabulous treasure battle mystic creatures.

Konami, which began selling the Laserscope Optical Command Headset late last year, is following up this year with two titles designed around the Laserscope: *Laser Invasion*, an attack-helicopter action game; and *The Lone Ranger*, an eight-stage game set in the old West, which ends in a showdown with Butch Cavendish. These games will also work with the NES Zapper light gun.

Ultra, which produced *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Arcade Game*, will release *Base Wars*, a futuristic combination of baseball and gladiatorial combat fought with robots.

Sunsoft will follow up *Batman* with a couple of new titles, including *Ufouria*, a comical interactive adventure with interchangeable characters; and *Super Spy Hunter*, a sequel to the arcade classic *Spy Hunter*. Fans of hard-driving action might also look for *Formula One — Built to Win* from Seta, which will also release *Battle Bull*, an action-puzzler for the Game Boy featuring bugs and bulldozers.

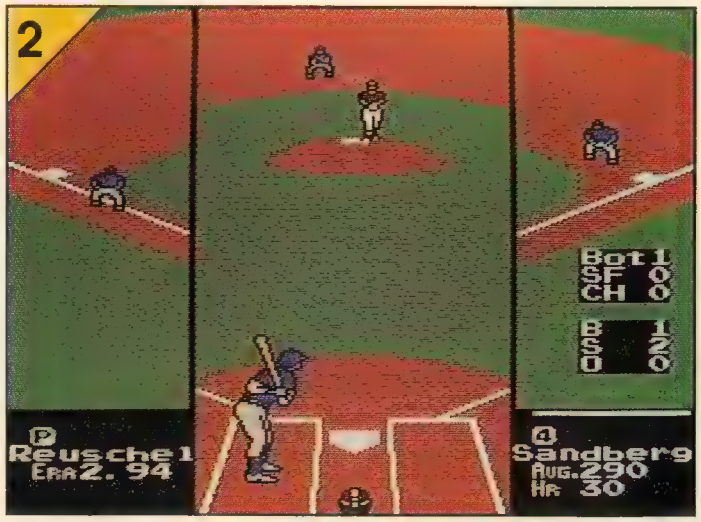
LJN follows its movie tie-in *Back to the Future II & III* with more games based on films: *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* for the NES, and *Beetlejuice* for both the NES and the Game Boy. Ocean also has a movie title scheduled for '91 release — *The Untouchables*.

Among the independent, unlicensed companies, Tengen plans *R.B.I. Baseball III* for the upcoming year, as well as *Airball*, an action game in which your character is cursed by an evil wizard and is turned into a bubblegum bubble with a slow leak. American Video Enterprises, another independent, will release a pair of new titles, both of which are action games — *F-15 City War* and *Double Strike*.

1 *Mariner's Run* is a seafaring adventure from Vic Tokai.

2 Tengen's *R.B.I. Baseball III* is the latest baseball game for Nintendo.

GP



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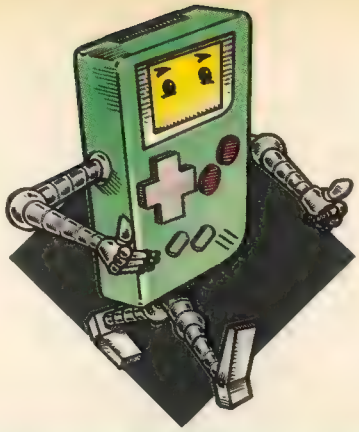


GAME BOY PLAYERS

Game Boy or Brain Boy?

Stephen Poole

Most people think of the Game Boy as a convenient little device that lets us play videogames in places we never could before. That's what the Game Boy was intended to be, of course, but it doesn't tell the whole story. It's easy to overlook the fact that the Game Boy is actually an inexpensive portable computer. With the right software, the Game Boy could do a lot more than play games.

Like what, for instance? We're about to find out. A new line of software, totally unlike anything ever seen for the Game Boy, is about to hit the stores. It has the potential to make people aware of just how powerful a tool a Game Boy can be.

The new cartridges, called InfoGenius Productivity Paks, are the first non-game products for the Game Boy. Gametek, which designed the Productivity Paks, is touting the software as the "first-ever complete informational system for the Game Boy."

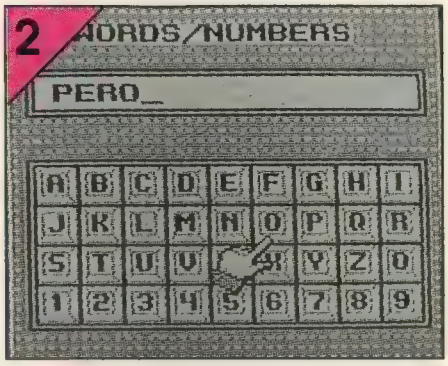
The first five cartridges (more are planned for the future) will include a spelling checker, a travel guide for the 20 most-visited cities in the United States, English-Spanish and English-French language translators, and a personal organizer with automatic phone-dialing capability.

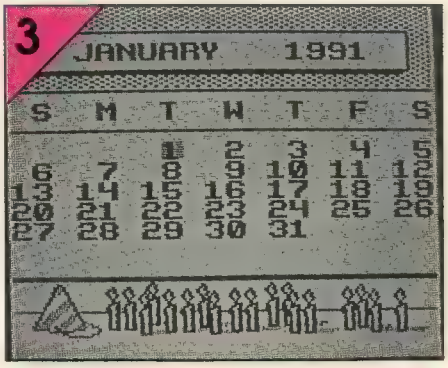
Similar software is available for leading hand-held computers, such as the Sharp Wizard. What's different about the InfoGenius Productivity Paks is they're designed to run on a system that until now was considered a toy. We get the impression that many companies in the videogame and computer industries will be watching closely to see if Gametek is successful in redefining the Game Boy.

What, No Keyboard?

The Game Boy's image isn't the only obstacle Gametek must overcome — there are technical problems as well. For instance, regular portable computers usually have miniature typewriter-style keyboards and calculator keypads. But the Game Boy has only a few simple controls: a directional pad, the Start and Select buttons, and the A and B buttons. How will you enter information to control the programs?

Gametek's answer is what's known in computer terms as a "menu-driven interface." For example, the first screen for the travel guide has two options: one for general information and another to bring up a list of cities. If you choose the cities option, you can make a selection by scrolling to the name of the city in which you're interested. After selecting a city, a series of submenus allows you to retrieve information by subject — such as nightspots, hotels, arts, restaurants, and so on. Each subject is then broken down even further. If you decide to look at restaurants, you'll





1 Gametek's InfoGenius Productivity Paks will be sold individually. Most are one-megabit cartridges, although the travel guide uses two megabits.

2 The language translators group words and phrases by subject matter, and also feature commonly used phrases.

3 The personal organizer has a calendar for keeping track of appointments and special events.

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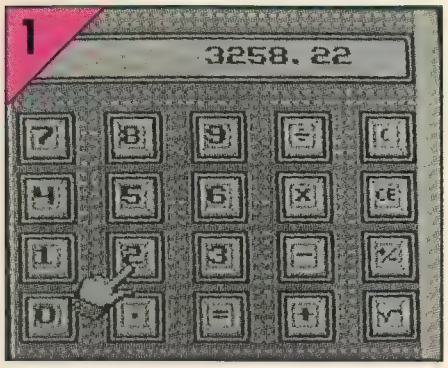
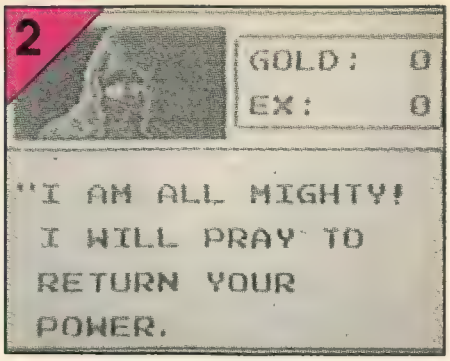
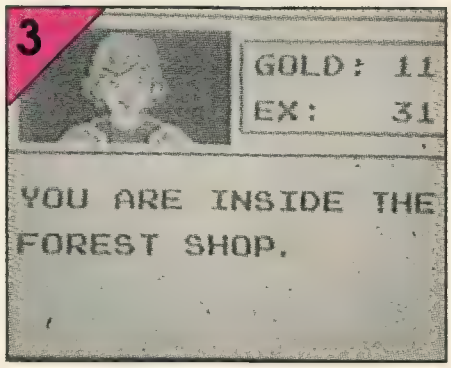
GAME BOY PLAYERS







find them sorted by price range, location, and type of cuisine (French, Italian, Chinese, etc.).

An easy-to-use interface is nice, but without accurate and reliable information the software would be useless. Realizing this, Gametek has made agreements with several leading publishers, each a recognized authority in a particular field. To develop the travel guide, for instance, Gametek is working with Frommer's, a publisher of travel books for more than 30 years. The word list for the spelling checker is being adapted from *The American Heritage Dictionary*, and the language translators will be based on phrase books and dictionaries by Berlitz, a famous publisher of language products.

At first, not many people are likely to buy a Game Boy just to run the InfoGenius software. Current Game Boy owners will be the first potential customers. How many of them are willing to buy a non-game product for their Game Boy? After all, didn't they buy their Game Boys to play games?

Interestingly, surveys by Nintendo indicate that almost half (40 percent) of primary Game Boy users are over 18 years old. The InfoGenius software is one of the first attempts to sell a Game Boy product specifically to those older users. And Gametek's own research indicates that youngsters as well as adults would buy informational software for the Game Boy. But most of the five initial products — especially the personal organizer and travel guide — seem to be aimed squarely at the increasing number of adults who are Game Boy users.

The InfoGenius Productivity Paks will range in price from $29 to $39. If they're successful, we're bound to see more and more software designed to make the Game Boy informative and productive as well as entertaining.

The Sword of Hope

One of the reasons for the Game Boy's popularity (about five million have been sold) is the wide variety of games available. Almost every style of game — from shooters and kung fu punch-em-outs to sports simulations and puzzlers — has been released for the Game Boy. But one category has been neglected. Fantasy role-playing games abound for the Nintendo Entertainment System, but the only one that comes to mind for the Game Boy is Square Soft's *Final Fantasy Legend*.

Perhaps game developers feel that Game Boy users often play on the go, and that it might be frustrating for a player to begin a very involved game only to put it down after a few minutes. Or maybe they feel that the increasing number of adults playing the Game Boy aren't familiar with fantasy role-playing games. Whatever the reason, role-playing adventures have received short shrift on the Game Boy.

With the release of *The Sword of Hope* from Kemco-Seika, the number of role-playing games for the Game Boy has now been doubled. And if you're new to fantasy role-playing, *The Sword of Hope* is a great introduction to this absorbing and fascinating style of game.

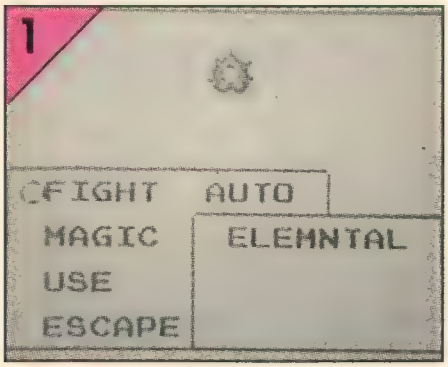
The Sword of Hope takes place in the legendary kingdom of Riccar. The happiness of the land had been threatened by an evil dragon, but his powers were kept in check by a sword — the Sword of Hope — stabbed into a portrait of the beast. Even though the dragon was bound by the sword, however, it managed to gain control over the king of Riccar and make him remove the sword. Once freed, the dragon summoned the evil god Mammon. Mammon turned all of

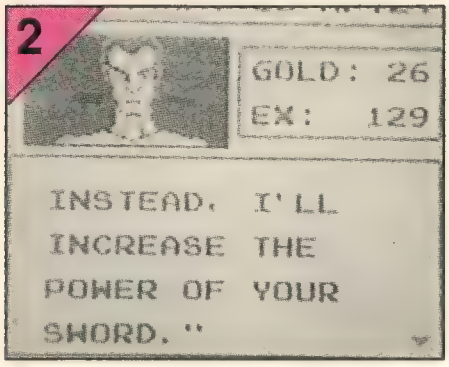
1 This calculator is another feature of the personal organizer.

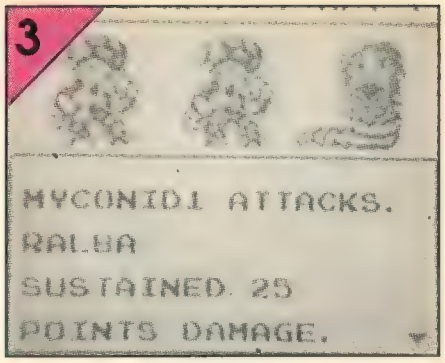
2 *The Sword of Hope*: The Shaman will restore all your health and magic points for a small fee, and teleporting to his house doesn't use any magic points, either.

3 The mistress of the forest shop has an item you'll need, but she won't reveal it on your first visit. Leave and come back.

GAME BOY PLAYERS







the people into trees, and darkness prevailed over the land.

The only person who can reverse this decline is Prince Theo. Born while the dragon gained control over his land, Prince Theo was spirited away by a knight and taken to three wizards. To prevent the evil forces from spreading, the wizards concealed the king and his castle underground, then split up and secured themselves behind the walls of their own lands — one of them taking the Sword of Hope as well. The upbringing of Prince Theo was entrusted to an old man.

Now Prince Theo is grown, and he must journey in search of the Sword of Hope. With it he can defeat the dragon and free the kingdom from darkness. As Prince Theo, you journey through the land of Riccar in search of the keys that will allow you to enter the wizards' kingdoms.

The game interface in *The Sword of Hope* is similar to those in many role-playing games for the NES, so veteran role players will feel right at home. But even a novice should be able to quickly master the basic functions, because the whole game is controlled with menus. The main menu has only six commands (Look, Open, Hit, Use, Magic, and Power), while the battle menu has four (Fight, Use, Magic, Escape).

For the most part, these commands are self-explanatory. For example, when you select Use, you're shown an inventory of the items you're carrying. Look is probably the most useful command; it's how you start conversations, and often you have to Look at something before you can use Hit or Open.

You control your movement by selecting directional arrows at the bottom of the screen. A black dot in front of an arrow indicates an enemy (or enemies) blocking your path, and if you want to go that way you'll have a fight on your hands. Drawing a map of your progress is useful at first, but soon you'll know your way around the different realms well enough that you won't refer to it very often.

As you gain experience, you'll get magic spells that are necessary to defeat some of the enemies you encounter. You'll also be rewarded with gold and other items essential to your quest. If you lose all your power in a battle, you're returned to the old man's house and admonished to be more careful in the future.

A password feature allows you to stop your game at any point and return to it later. This makes it easy to play for 10 or 20 minutes and save your progress — ideal for the way the portable Game Boy is likely to be used.

The Sword of Hope takes full advantage of the Game Boy's capabilities, delivering a role-playing experience as satisfying and as expansive as most role-playing games for the NES. If you're an old hand at these games, you'll take to *The Sword of Hope* right away. And if you've never tried a role-player, you might be surprised at how quickly you're drawn in by the game's strategic challenges and problem-solving aspects. *The Sword of Hope* has the potential to introduce a whole new audience to the experience of role-playing — and to broaden the Game Boy's already wide horizons.

GP

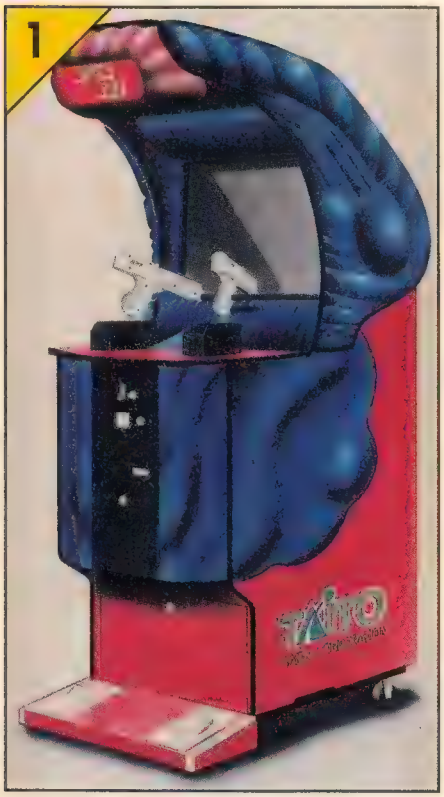
1 Elementals are actually harmless unless killed. Then they explode into fragments and damage you. If you meet one by itself, don't attack it; use the Escape command.

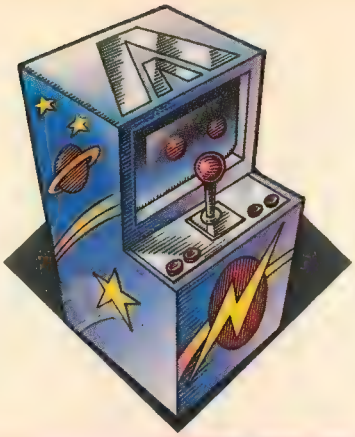
2 Each wizard requires you to accomplish some task to prove yourself worthy of the Hope Sword. If you're successful, the wizard rewards you upon your return.

3 Sometimes monsters attack each other instead of you. The myconids seem to do this more often than others, but you should never count on it.

You say you're tired of all those great new Nintendo games you got for Christmas? You say you've already brought peace to the galaxy in that expansive new computer adventure? You're bored and you're restless? Is that what's troubling you, bunky?

Well, lift up your head and get down to your local video arcade, because there's an excellent assortment of new games just waiting to be played!





ARCADE ACTION

Spring Fever

Scott Wolf

If science fiction is your thing, Taito has something to get your adrenaline pumping. The year is A.D. 2039, and once again a bunch of hapless weenies at a distant space colony have fallen victim to some lurking horror. Who do they call for help? Stop looking around — it's *you*. Yes, you and your crack squad of off-world commandos are the heroes of Taito's *Space Gun*.

En route to the colony, you receive a distress signal from an Earth-bound cargo ship. It seems that the crew has been attacked by hostile alien life forms. (There must be something wrong with the screening process for spacebound personnel, because this sort of thing is happening all the time.) Anyway, your mission is to search the ship for survivors while fending off the fiendish aliens.

Like *Operation Thunderbolt*, the *Space Gun* cabinet has two guns mounted side by side for two-player action, plus two foot pedals so you can back up in case you miss something. Each weapon has a pump-action grip for selecting different projectiles, and a fully automatic machine-gun mode.

As you move forward and sideways through the claustrophobic corridors and wardrooms of the gigantic cargo ship, you mow down the deadly aliens and rescue the human crew members. (Or, if you're too trigger-happy, you mow down the crew members, too.) The eerie sound effects and bloody bite-and-claw marks on your faceplate convey the deadly urgency of this little outing.

If you're tired of blasting aliens, how about a knock-down, drag-out brawl on wheels? Suit up and hit the track for Konami's *RollerGames*, which is also available for Nintendo. Based on TV roller derby, *RollerGames* puts you on a cross-country circuit with the futuristic sports team of your choice. All of your faves are here: the T-Birds, the Violators, the Bad Attitude, the Rockers, the Hot Flash, and the Maniacs.

1 *Space Gun* has a pair of light pistols and foot pedals for two-player action.

2 Don't let these ugly aliens in *Space Gun* get too close or they'll use you for dental floss.

You can compete against a friend or the computer in this nonstop skating frenzy. Start off by "shooting the wall" and proceed to take out the Power Guards and Jetters for maximum points. After you complete each leg of the tour, you go head-to-head with the captain of the opposing team in a bare-fisted punchout.

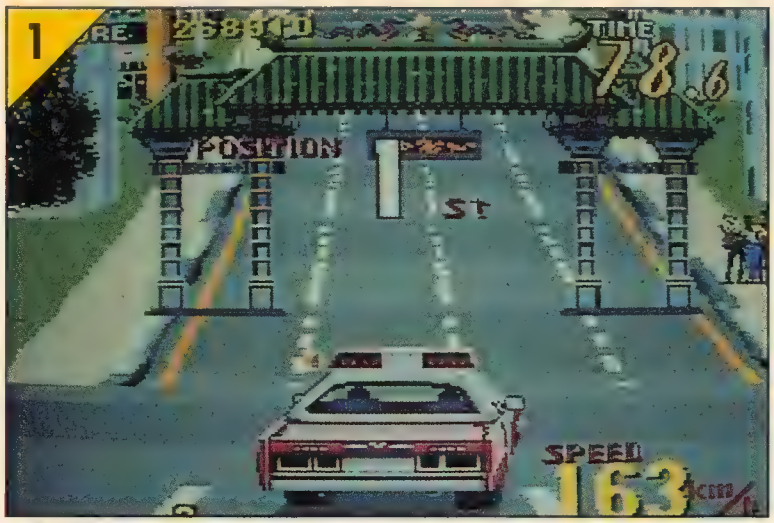
If roller skating is too tame for you, check out Jaleco's *Cisco Heat*. This auto-racing game has an interesting twist. You're not a cop chasing bad guys — you're a cop racing through the streets of San Francisco against other cops! If you remember the breathtaking car chase in the Steve McQueen movie *Bullitt*, you've got some idea of the

ARCADE ACTION

1 *Cisco Heat* takes you on a wild roller-coaster ride through the hilly streets of San Francisco as you race against other cops.

2 Pokey cable cars and pesky pedestrians are only a few of the traffic hazards you'll face in *Cisco Heat*.

3 *Pigskin 621 AD* is a Dark Ages football game with dark humor. For instance, if you don't watch where you're running, you could tumble through this trapdoor into a dungeon.



wild ride you're in for as you go hurtling over San Francisco's famous hills, swerving to avoid cable cars and tortoiselike civilian drivers. (Hint: If you lean on the horn, sometimes they'll get out of your way.)

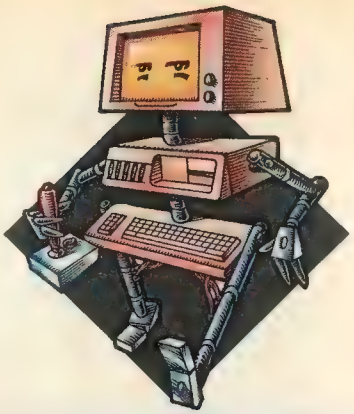
Have you ever wondered how the game of football got started? Me neither, but Bally/Midway has an amusing theory. Back in the Dark Ages, when the world's wildest warriors needed to let off a little steam, they engaged in a little sport called *Pigskin 621 AD*. No first downs...no timeouts...in fact, no rules at all! Just lots of down-and-dirty fun as your army-team brawls its way to the goal line through dungeons and treacherous swamps. Yep, that *was* the sound of bones breaking!

Meanwhile, on the ever-widening Simpsons front, it seems as if the only product that's *not* endorsed by the famous cartoon family is aardvark food. Konami's new arcade videogame version of *The Simpsons* is eight levels of comic mayhem as the Simpson family battles to rescue baby Maggie, who has been abducted by jewel thieves.

Up to four players can participate at once — controlling Homer, Bart, Lisa, or Marge. Each character has his or her own unique style of combat. Bart whacks the villains with his trusty skateboard, Lisa cracks her jump rope like a grade-school Indiana Jones, Marge wields a lethal vacuum cleaner, and Homer relies on his fists. All of the famous characters from the hit TV show are here, and there's even a round that takes place in a cemetery, playfully mocking Michael Jackson's "Thriller" video.

So there you have it — five fabulous reasons to squander your hard-earned cash. Just tell 'em the Wolfman sent you.

GP



PC PLAYERS

PGA Tour Golf and *Links*

Neil Randall

Despite the appearance here of *Jack Nicklaus' Unlimited Golf & Course Design* a couple of issues ago, and now this column on *PGA Tour Golf* and *Links*, "PC Players" isn't really turning into a regular column about golf games. It's just that golf simulations have been coming out with unusual frequency lately, and — more importantly — they're all good.

PGA Tour Golf, from Electronic Arts, is designed for those who watch golf on TV. The main difference, of course, is that *you* take the role of one of the players. You compete against the world's best golfers in one of the Professional Golfers' Association tournaments. At stake is prize money and a chance to improve on your personal best statistics.

The leader board shows your score and the scores of a host of other players, all of them under the computer's control. But don't worry — you don't have to watch all of them take their shots. Instead, a TV announcer lets you know every so often how the leaders are faring, which competitors have improved their standings, and which players are dropping out of the race.

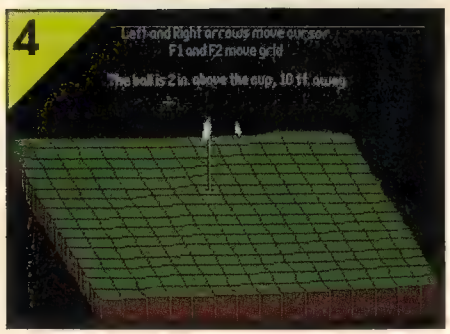
PGA Tour Golf imitates TV in other ways as well. One option allows you to see a course fly-by at the beginning of each hole, complete with a TV-style color commentary on the condition and nature of the hole. And after each shot, you can ask for a replay using either a "camera view" that shows the golfer's swing or one that follows the ball to its destination.

Most impressive of all is how the camera view changes during every shot. Most golf games let you watch the ball through the golfer's eyes (or, to be more accurate, from directly behind the golfer). *PGA Tour Golf* automatically shows you the reverse angle, letting you watch the ball soar through the air, land, and come to rest — much as you see it on TV.

The graphics in *PGA Tour Golf* are astounding. While not as richly detailed as those in *Links*, the graphics appear almost instantly, without the lengthy screen draws in *Links*. To achieve this speed, it is true that *PGA Tour Golf* sacrifices some degree of terrain accuracy, especially when it comes to irregularities, gradations, hills, and valleys. But the time you save is so substantial that you probably won't notice. Because *PGA Tour Golf* is as much a simulation of televised golf as it is a simulation of the actual sport, the tradeoff seems exactly right.

PGA Tour Golf is also a very

2
Hole #17 132 yards Par 3
Sawgrass
Paul Azinger
"Wind on this hole always makes club selection tough. Go for the center of the island no matter where the pin is"



1 *PGA Tour Golf*: You can choose from four actual golf courses (three of them on the PGA tour). This is a bird's-eye view of Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra, Florida.

2 Pro golfers make cameo appearances to lend advice.

3 The screens in *PGA Tour Golf* are uncluttered but display all of the vital information: the hole, par, stroke number, club, distance to your "target," wind direction, and wind speed.

4 The optional grid helps you determine the "break" of the green while putting.

forgiving simulation. First of all, you don't have to know much about golf to make some very good shots. Second, after a good hole, you can just save your game and then restart whenever you ten-putt another hole. By carefully saving and restarting your game, you can end up winning the tournament.

Links, from Access Software, is an entirely different kind of golf game. It clearly attempts to be the golf simulation to end all golf simulations, and in that way competes with *Greg Norman's Shark Attack* (Mastertronic) and, to some extent, *Jack Nicklaus' Unlimited Golf & Course Design* (Accolade) rather than *PGA Tour Golf*. But the rich graphics of *Links* and *PGA Tour Golf* force a comparison, even though a real golf nut will probably want to own both of these products.

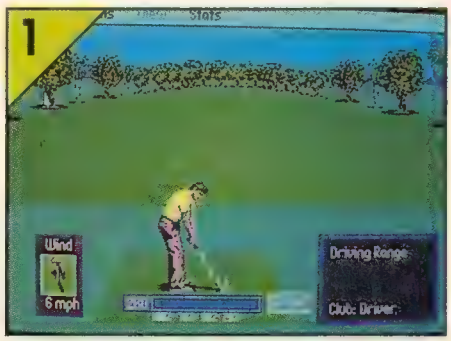
That Access Software is extremely serious about *Links* as a simulation is obvious from the fact that you can't even run the program without an AT-class computer or better. If you don't have a machine with a fast 80286 or 80386 microprocessor, forget it. In addition, you need VGA or MCGA graphics — good old EGA isn't enough — and at least 640K of memory. If you have more than 640K, *Links* will try to use it to preload the graphics files. This is extremely desirable, considering the length of time it takes the program to draw each new screen.

For maximum accuracy in *Links*, you must set the distant, medium-range, and close-range graphics scenes for maximum detail. If you have an 80386 and extended or expanded memory, this is an acceptable mode of play. For faster play, use a 386 computer and minimum detail on the distant scenes. On a 286 with only 640K, screen draws at these settings are gorgeous but extremely lengthy. Fortunately, the graphics are just fine at the lower detail settings, so adjust them to get more speed.

No matter how you set the graphics, you're in for a lot of waiting. But the graphics in *Links* are truly stunning — better than in any golf game yet produced, and better than in most games of any type whatsoever.

Supplementing the graphics is a golf simulation that rewards real golfers without being too difficult for non-golfers to play. You can

1. If you need more practice before entering a PGA tournament, spend some time on the driving range. There's also a practice putting green.
2. *Links*: Notice the fine detail in both the background and the foreground. The golfer is rendered realistically, too.
3. Hmmm...a tree stands in the way. Luckily, a chip shot in *Links* really means a chip shot, so you can tap the ball underneath the tree's branches.
4. The *Links* scorecard is attractive and accurate. The first nine holes are on the front side and the back nine are on the reverse.



adjust your stance and the angle at which the club strikes the ball. In addition, hooks and slices are not controlled only by the "power bar," as they are in most golf games. Instead, you can opt for a slight hook or slice as part of your shot — just as you can swing from the outside in or the inside out. Real golfers do these kinds of things, so *Links* lets you do them, too.

For still more flexibility, *Links* allows you to customize many of its features. Each player may compete at a different level of expertise, so it's very easy to let beginners play while you tackle the more challenging pro level. You can choose which clubs you want to take with you, and you can choose any club you want while you're out in the rough. You can even step back and "address" the ball, and you have to work hard to get around the slopes and valleys.

So which is better — *PGA Tour Golf* or *Links*? Personally, I prefer the greater realism of *Links*. But I'm using a 33-megahertz 386, which makes it astoundingly quick. If you want simpler and faster golf, with (almost) equally gorgeous graphics, try *PGA Tour Golf*. Or buy one and put the other on your birthday list. Both are very much worth having.

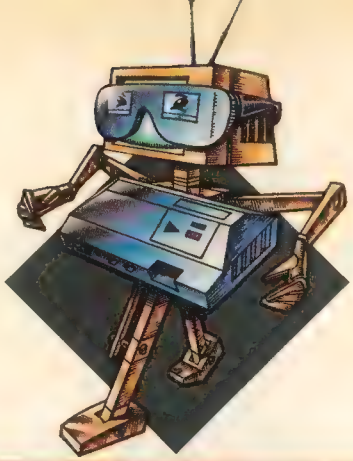
GP

1 The bird's-eye view is available anytime. The arrow points to a worthwhile target on the fairway; the figures at the lower left show a distance of 256 yards to that point.

2 After each shot, *Links* tells you how far the ball traveled and how close it is to the pin. This spectacular approach shot put you within birdie range.

3 The optional grid feature in *Links* demonstrates clearly that this green is on a very definite slope. Better rotate to the right and aim up the hill.

4 Ah, golf. The sunny greens, the gorgeous trees, and the sight of the ocean not far away. Not a bad job if you can get it.



SEGA PLAYERS

Buster Douglas K.O.'s Tyson — Again

Matthew A. Firme

After Buster Douglas lost the heavyweight crown in his first title defense, we wondered if he might also lose his new Genesis game. Would Sega change *Buster Douglas Knockout Boxing* to *Evander Hollifield Knockout Boxing*? After all, Nintendo quickly pulled Mike Tyson's name from *Mike Tyson's Punch-Out* after he went down in defeat!

But Sega apparently isn't too concerned with Buster's loss. It was his victory that Sega wanted to commemorate — his surprise knockout of Mike Tyson last year. Sega went ahead and released the game as *James "Buster" Douglas Knockout Boxing*, and it's a winner.

Unlike *Punch-Out* for Nintendo, *Buster Douglas Boxing* doesn't have funny, cartoonish fighters who whirl and dance

around the ring. Instead, the fighters are all realistic boxers, and the only way to beat them is to outbox them.

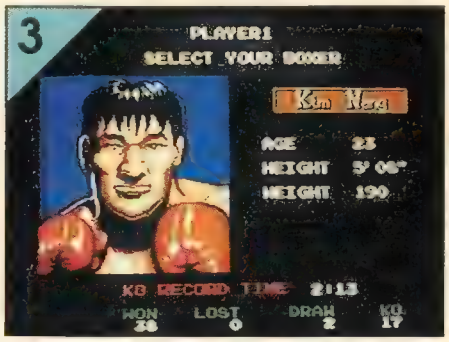
You can choose to fight as any of five different boxers. They differ in such aspects as hand speed, power, and the ability to take a punch. Regardless of whom you choose, your moves are the same

1	In *Buster Douglas Knockout Boxing*, you can choose to fight as any one of five different boxers, each with his own characteristics. Buster has enormous power.
2	King Jason is vulnerable to the uppercut—something to keep in mind.
3	Kim Nang is fast, tough, and smart. He's one of your most difficult challenges.

— jabs, uppercuts, upper hooks, and straight punches on offense, and such defensive moves as crouching, leaping back, guarding your head or body with your arms, and leaning back to avoid jabs.

You can aim punches at your opponent's head or body. By pressing both the A and B buttons at once, you can throw a slow uppercut, a straight punch, or an upper hook. The slow blows leave you open, but if you land one, you'll really daze your opponent.

You can play *Buster Douglas Boxing* against a friend or the com-



puter. If you play the computer, you enter a four-round tournament against the other fighters. If you defeat all four to become the champion, you have to defend your title against the same four opponents—but this time they're much tougher. If you hang on through four title defenses, you'll face the brutal Iron Head, the ultimate challenger. His power is unrivaled, and his speed dizzying. The only way to beat him is to avoid his crushing blows and watch for an opening.

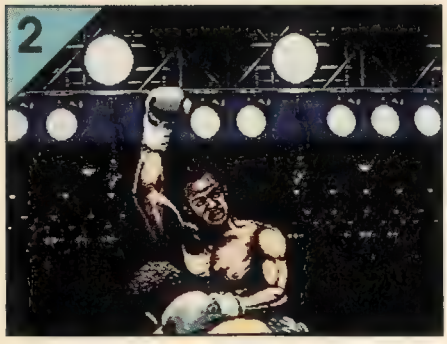
The most impressive feature of *Buster Douglas Boxing* is its potential for real boxing action. In the one-player mode, you can set the difficulty level to suit your ability and determine the number of rounds in each bout (from 1 to 12). If you think you're pretty good after a few wins, try a 12-round tournament on the most difficult setting. By about the fifth fight, you'll find that you can't manhandle the opponent the way you did on the easy setting. You have to fight smart, using defense as well as offense.

But *don't* rely on defense alone to win a fight. Even if you crouch through 12 rounds with Kim Nang and think you've done well because you're still standing, you're in for a surprise. *Buster Douglas*

Boxing awards points just like the judges do in a real professional match. If you don't fight, you lose.

The game has a few shortcomings, despite its strengths. The sound effects are disappointing — no digitized speech, and no real crowd noise (other than a static-like hum). The music plays between rounds and during pauses, but at no other times. Although the graphics are generally excellent, the between-round interludes are all stills and never change. And it would have been nice to see some new faces once you win the title, instead of fighting everyone twice.

Still, *Buster Douglas Boxing* does such a good job of bringing you the feel and strategy of boxing that it's easy to overlook these flaws.

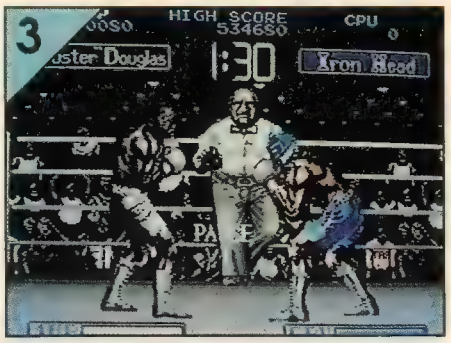


Data East Endorses Genesis

Data East has long been making games for Nintendo and personal computers, such as *Werewolf: The Last Warrior* for the NES and *ABC Monday Night Football* for PCs. Data East also produces such coin-op arcade hits as *Rampage* and *Bad Dudes*. Now the company will begin making Genesis games as an official Sega licensee. This makes Data East the first software publisher to compete in all four major areas of electronic entertainment.

Data East will establish its Sega line with the release of three new titles. The first, *Crystal Quest*, is a racing game set in space. Players compete for crystals on a monster-infested racetrack through the stars.

The two other titles are both based on arcade games. In *Vapor Trail* you fly a jet fighter, and in *Midnight Resistance* you're a military officer whose family has been kidnapped by a dangerous gang of South American drug lords. You can expect plenty of danger as you battle to free your loved ones.



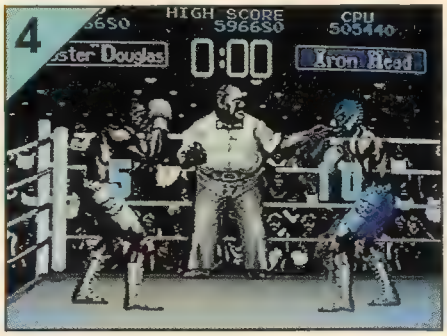
1 As each round begins, the ref gives you the signal to start punching. He'll also intervene if you stay in a clutch too long, and order you to fight if you're avoiding each other.

2 Victory! Now you'll defend your title against the same four fighters.

3 Your final challenge is the imposing Iron Head. Don't let him get too close!

4 If you go the distance, you'll have to hope for a favorable decision.

Data East plans to release more Genesis titles throughout the coming year.



EA's New Games

It promises to be a great year for Genesis players. Between Sega of America and the growing number of licensees, 1991 should bring a record number of new titles for the Genesis. Most of the new games hadn't been announced as this issue went to press, but here are a few you can expect to see in coming months.

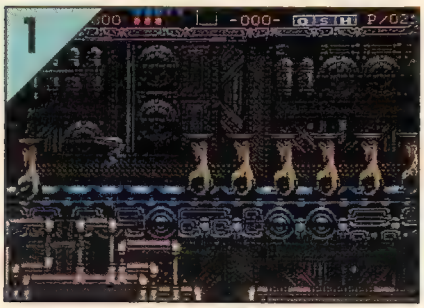
Last year, Electronic Arts quickly became the most prolific Sega Genesis licensee, turning out such hits as *Populous*, *Budokan: The Martial Spirit*, and *Lakers versus Celtics*, to name a few. The news for 1991: Watch for many, many more EA titles.

Among the first new games announced are *PGA Tournament Golf*, *Dark Castle*, *King's Bounty*, *Might & Magic II*, *Unreal*, *Road Rash*, and *James Pond, Underwater Agent*.

PGA Tournament Golf, like many of EA's titles, is based on a computer game. This simulation, sanctioned by the Professional Golfers' Association, features real professionals (Fuzzy Zoeller, Larry Mize, and Paul Azinger, for example), and real tournaments and courses. The battery backup feature saves your statistics for each round.

Dark Castle is set in a haunted castle in the days when the world was filled with chivalry and magic. You are a brave but humble hero who's trying to find and defeat the

SEGA PLAYERS



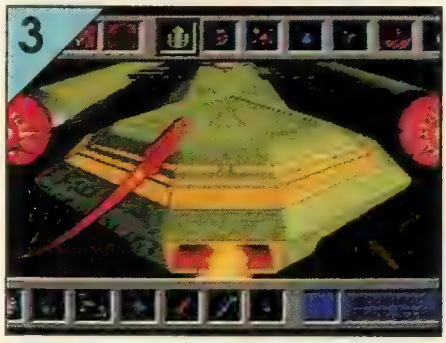
Black Knight. Armed only with rocks and a magical elixir, you face rats, bats, monkeys, dragons, and Merlin the magician as you travel through 14 danger-filled levels. Along the way you'll find important weapons and spells that can help you crush the Black Knight in your final battle.

King's Bounty, a computer role-playing game, comes to the Genesis with several alterations intended to improve game play. The fighting sequences have been changed to emphasize arcade-style action over the traditional turn-oriented combat. More frames have been added to each animated segment, giving the graphics a smoother look.

Might & Magic II: Gates to Another World was one of the best-selling computer games of 1989. As the leader of a band of adventurers, your task is to forestall predictions that great suffering will soon come to your world. Unlike most fantasy role-playing games, you don't have to follow one particular path to succeed. In fact, the game contains hundreds of possible quests, and players are free to tackle them in any fashion or order they like.

Unreal is an arcade-style action game originally designed for the Amiga. As Artaban, a brave and resourceful young warrior, you set out to rescue Princess Isolde from the malevolent Master of Darkness. You'll fight through swamps, woods, and snow, ultimately harnessing the Four Elements and delivering your planet of Unreal from anarchy.

Road Rash is said to blend "the thrilling speed of motorcycle racing with the no-holds-barred excitement and danger of a street fight." In this racing game, you speed along public streets and highways, doing whatever it takes to win — avoiding angry motorists and shoving fellow riders into oncoming traffic.



1 *Wings of Wor* is a new space shooter from Dreamworks.

2-3 *Star Control*, adapted from a computer game, is one of the first Genesis titles from Accolade.

James Pond, Underwater Agent is a lighthearted parody of James Bond movies. When the fiendish Dr. Maybe begins polluting the world's oceans, only one fish can stop him: James Pond. You must thwart Dr. Maybe's schemes to dump radioactive waste and hide oil spills. *James Pond* should appeal to all ages, but is designed to be challenging for even the most experienced gamers.

Genesis Games Galore

More Genesis titles are coming from a variety of independent companies. Accolade, a longtime computer game publisher and now a Sega licensee, will introduce the shooter *Onslaught* and the futuristic *Star Control*. Accolade is also planning to release *HardBall!*, based on the hit baseball game first released for computers. Accolade's first Genesis title, *Ishido: The Way of Stones*, was released at the end of 1990.

Dreamworks is planning to release *Wings of Wor*, a space shooter, and *Jesse "The Body" Ventura's Superstars of Wrestling*.

RazorSoft has announced *StormLord*, a side-scrolling adventure. As with *TechnoCop*, a previous RazorSoft release, *StormLord* will carry a parental warning label due to its violent, adult subject matter. Also coming from RazorSoft are two role-playing titles: *Death Duel* and *Death By Steel*.

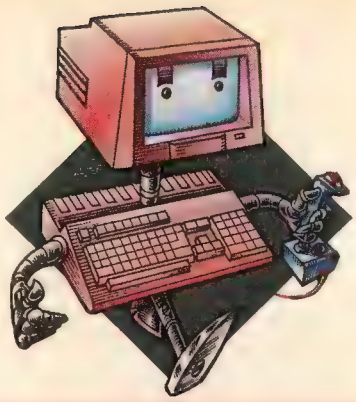
Renovation is planning to release several new titles, including *Gaiares*, *Gain Ground*, *Valis III*, *Dinoland*, and *Arcus Odyssey*.

Sage's Creation, the publisher of *Crackdown* for the Genesis, has announced *Blue Almanac*.

Tengen has announced *Pit Fighter*, *Pac-Mania*, and *R.B.I. Baseball III*.

Be sure not to miss our next issue of *Game Player's* — we'll have a complete report on all the Sega news at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, including Sega's official U.S. introduction of the hand-held Game Gear.

GP



AMIGA PLAYERS

Powermonger

Sheldon Leemon

Although it's a little late to be talking about the Game Player's Awards for 1990 (they were announced last month), and a little early for the 1991 awards, *Powermonger* is clearly a future contender. That's not surprising, considering that it's the latest effort from Bullfrog, the British programming group that produced last year's award-winning *Populous*. Although *Powermonger* is not a sequel to *Populous* (*Populous II* is coming a little later), it takes the concepts that made *Populous* a smash hit and carries them a step further. As result, *Powermonger* is an even richer, deeper, and more rewarding game.

In *Populous*, you played the part of a primitive tribe's god. In *Powermonger*, you're reduced to the role of a dispossessed king who wants to conquer the world. This is no easy task, because the map of the world is divided into 195 sections, and you've got to reach the bottom right corner of the map before you can consider yourself the ultimate powermonger.

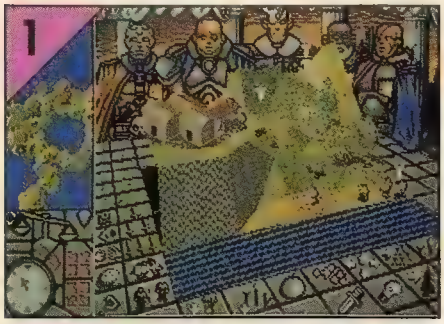
In each section of the map you start out with a captain and his small band of followers. Your mission is to conquer villages until two-thirds of the population is under your rule. You do this by forging alliances; by attacking weak villages and bringing their people under your control; and by building (or taking) weapons that make your army more powerful. You are opposed not only by the native inhabitants (who fight fiercely to defend their homes), but also by roving bands of other invaders. In addition, you must keep your army supplied with food and contend with forces of nature (such as rain and snow) that slow your marches.

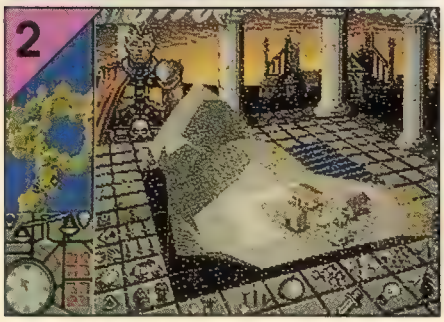
The layout of the game screen and controls is very similar to that of *Populous*. In the center of the screen is a scrolling map of a small area of countryside, viewed from a three-quarters perspective. You can move around this closeup map by clicking on arrow icons or by positioning the cursor on a tiny overview map which appears in the upper left corner of the screen. (Though the manual doesn't say so, you can also scroll around by pressing the cursor keys.) As in *Populous*, the figures on the closeup map are very small, but their actions are quite lifelike.

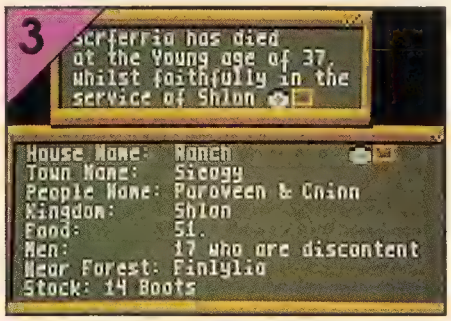
This sense of realism is heightened by the simulated 3-D effects. You can zoom in or out on the map, and even view it from any angle by using rotation controls.

At the side and bottom of the closeup map are various control icons. By clicking on them, you can send your captain orders — instructing him to attack, to build weapons, to get food from a friendly village, or to march from one spot to another.

One of the most important controls is one that allows you to display an information window about any person or object on the screen. For example, you can click on a building in a settlement to find out what kind of building it is, who's inside the building, who rules the settlement, and what quantities of food and other supplies are stored there. By clicking on an individual person, you can find out the







1. If you conquer a village that's large enough to have its own captain, he joins you as a helper.
2. Snow and rain are clues to the changing of the seasons (and make it more difficult for your army to march).
3. By clicking on any object or person on the screen, you can call up one of these information windows.

person's name, age, occupation, and loyalty. This feature allows you to learn a great deal about the little figures that go scurrying around the screen.

Another source of information is the game's many sound effects. In the Amiga version of *Populous*, you could always hear a heartbeat that represented the health of your tribe; in *Powermonger*, you can always hear the breathing of your captain. When it's slow and regular, all is well. When you give your captain an order, he'll respond by saying "Yeah" — loudly and enthusiastically if he agrees with the order, or less so if he feels it's a bad idea. When your army wins a battle, the men cheer loudly. Sometimes you can hear the troops murmuring among themselves as they sit around the campfire. As you move around the map, you'll hear various local sounds. Saws and hammers indicate that the enemy is building weapons; the bleating of sheep identifies a potential food source; singing birds tell you that spring has come at last.

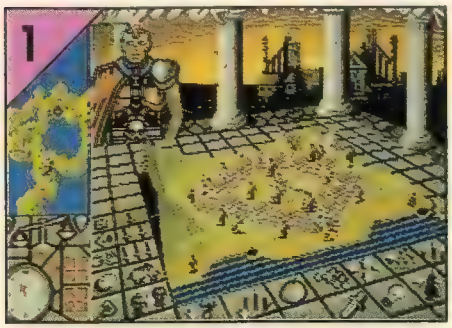
AMIGA PLAYERS

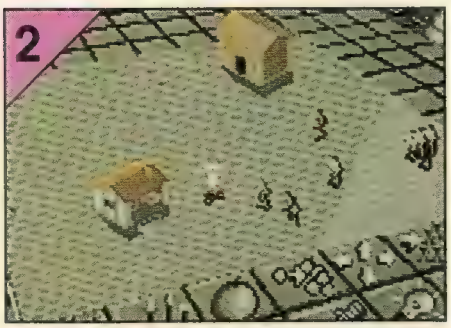
Powermonger is chiefly a game of skill and planning. Brute force doesn't always win the day: If you kill too many of the local inhabitants, there will be nobody left to produce food, and no new recruits for your army. Since the conditions are different in each land, you must also vary your strategy. In one place, for example, food may be in short supply, so getting groceries might be your main goal. In places where there's a lot of water, your army may want to use boats for conquest, but taking too many will reduce food production in the fishing villages. In some lands you've got to attack quickly and repeatedly to succeed, while in others you've got to bide your time and build your forces — or face instant annihilation.

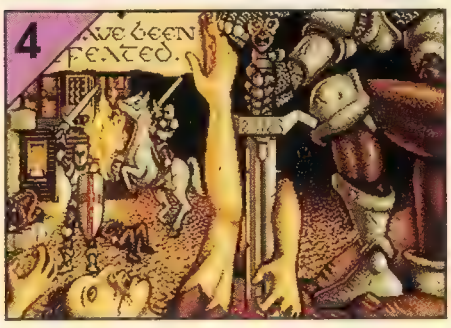
The game becomes even more complex when you take over a village that has its own captain. Since he, too, comes under your control, you can give him orders just as you can your original captain.

Although *Powermonger* is not a fast-action arcade-style game, neither does time stand still while you're deciding what move to make next. Your army's food supply is constantly being consumed, seasons are always changing (which determines how much food is available and how easy it is to travel), and your enemies are building weapons and perhaps even conquering villages themselves. If you have several captains under your control, it takes some fancy footwork (or mousework) to watch all of them at once. It's quite possible for one captain to be attacked and wiped out while you're leading another captain to war.

Although there's a lot to learn before you master *Powermonger*, the beginning worlds are easy enough to tackle after picking up only a few commands. As you progress, new twists and obstacles are added to each world, and you must learn new tactics to overcome them. The deeper you get into the game's options and strategies, the more exciting and challenging it becomes. With game play that is deep and engaging, and extraordinary graphics and sound, *Powermonger* may become an even bigger hit







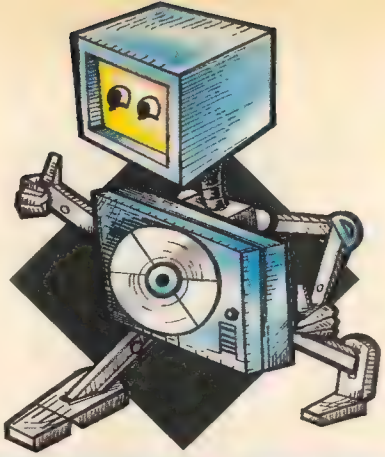
1 You'll have to raise a pretty large army to defeat a town of this size.

2 To capture territory, you have to fight. The white spirit rising up shows that a soldier has been killed in the fray.

3 This cheerful scene keeps you from getting too cocky about your occasional victory.

4 More often than not, you'll go down to defeat.

GP

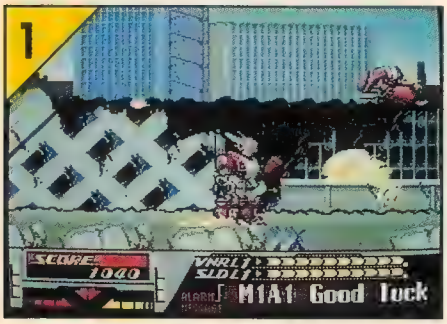


TURBO PLAYERS

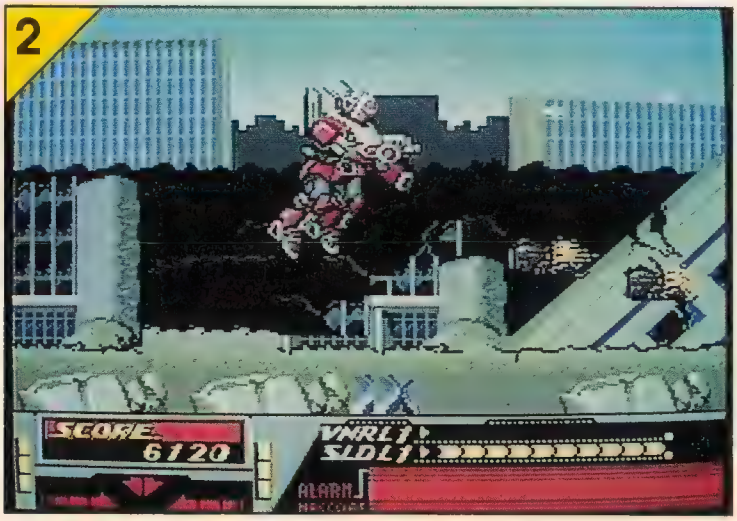
Veigues, Drop Off, and Valis II

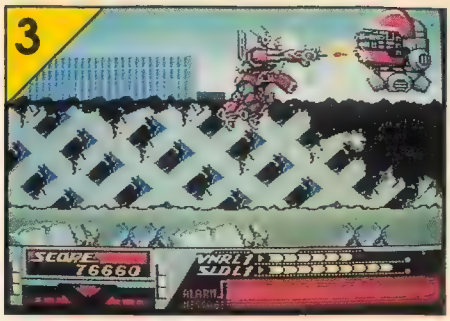
Neil Randall

This time around we'll look at three new games — two for the standard TurboGrafx-16 and one for the TurboGrafx-CD player. *Veigues* and *Drop Off* are the new cartridge games, and *Valis II* is the latest CD title. It's interesting to note that CD games are appearing with much greater frequency now, and many more are coming. NEC says that half of the games to be released this year will be CD titles, including educational programs and role-playing games with digitized screens of real actors. Only a small minority of NEC owners have purchased the $399 CD player, though, so we'll continue to concentrate our attention on cartridge-based games.



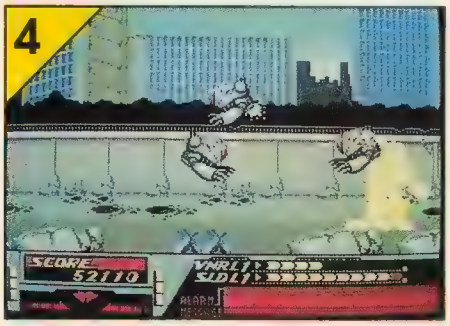
Veigues is a science-fiction shooting game set in the year 2321. As a warrior in the Federation Army, your mission is to command the fighting robot Veigues in a last-ditch battle against Earth's invaders. You have only one robot, and there are huge numbers of enemies, so you'll have to learn to use all of Veigues' resources. Don't worry, though — Veigues has *plenty* of resources.





The game is played in ten stages, each with a host of enemies and a boss at the end. Each stage has different background scenery with colorful graphics. Veigues can jump, turn, shoot the weapon in his right hand, fire the more powerful weapon located in his chest, or lash out a "field punch" with his left hand. When Veigues is turning, he's invincible, and sometimes this is the only way to avoid damage from enemy fire.

Veigues' shields absorb damage first, followed by his head, his left arm, and finally his right arm. When his weapons are disabled, he's a sitting duck, so keep the



1 *Veigues*: As a Federation warrior in the year 2321, your mission is to command the fighting robot Veigues against hordes of invaders.

2 *Veigues*: Don't spend too much time on the ground or you'll be zapped by these enemy rockets.

3 *Veigues*: The boss machines — like this flying vacuum cleaner — are extremely tough.

4 *Veigues*: If your shield power drops too low, you'll be roasted. And in this game, you get only one life.

TURBO PLAYERS

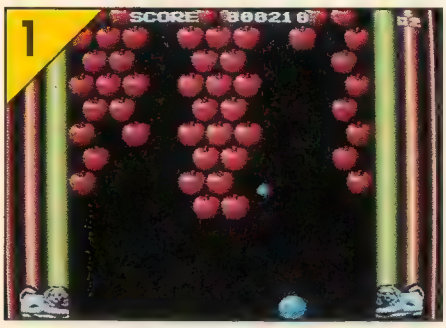
1 *Drop Off*: As in *Breakout* and *Arkanoid*, the object is to keep the ball from hitting the bottom of the screen. *Drop Off* is a little more forgiving than *Breakout*, however.

2 *Drop Off*: When the train appears, it gives you bonus points and repairs the wall at the bottom of the screen.

3 *Drop Off*: Don't forget you can move your ball-shaped paddle up the screen to chase after the ball. You can also change the direction of the ball's bounce.

4 *Valis II*: Before entering the tunnels, our heroine Yuko encounters a monster. Turn the left turbo switch to high and hold down button II.

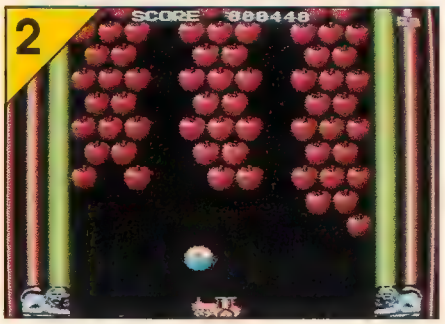
shields beefed up. You can do this at the end of each stage when Veigues is automatically repaired. You can obtain better weapons for his right arm and his chest, and



you can add power to his shields, his left arm, his body, and his jumping ability. This well-designed and colorful screen adds an element of strategy to what is basically a shoot-em-up game.

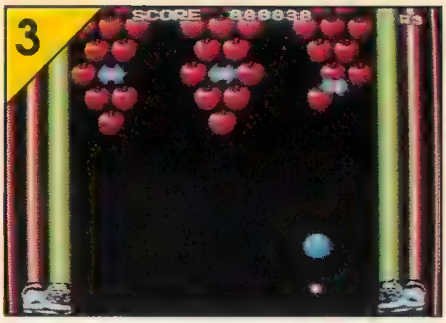
Because *Veigues* gives you only one life to work with, it seems more realistic than other shooters. It's colorful, fast, and addictive.

Drop Off is something entirely different. In this quick-paced game, the object is to make clusters of fruit, diamonds, and other items drop off their stems and fall out of harm's way. As the clusters of objects slowly descend from the top of the screen, you deflect a bouncing ball toward them by moving a ball-shaped paddle across the bottom of the screen.



Videogame veterans will notice that *Drop Off* has a lot in common with such older games as *Breakout*, *Arkanoid*, and even good old *Pong*. In this case, though, the objects you're trying to hit aren't stationary, and letting the ball get past you isn't fatal—at least, not at first. Each time you miss the ball, it knocks a small piece out of a wall just behind your paddle. If you miss the ball again and it falls through one of the holes, you lose your paddle.

You can aim the ball by adjusting the placement of your paddle or by pressing button II to change the direction of the bounce. You can also move the paddle up and down the screen for even more control (and more risk). To win the game, you must clear 16 stages, each more difficult than the last.



Hidden among the bunches of fruits, vegetables, skulls, and other objects are special power-ups. They range from invulnerability to a more powerful penetrating ball. You can also find arrows, which let you force the falling objects back to the top of the screen (very useful!), and extra paddles (you start the game with three). Another power-up turns the bottom of the screen into an impenetrable iron wall.

If you manage to return the ball 15 times in a row without missing, a small train rolls across the bottom of the screen, repairs any holes in the wall, and gives you bonus points.

Drop Off is a good, simple game

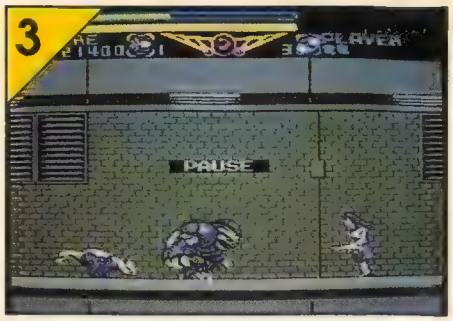
TURBO PLAYERS

— but it could have been better. Getting started seems too difficult to successfully draw you into repeated play, and there just isn't enough variety. It's sure to attract some fans, but NEC has better games to offer.

Valis II is a six-level fantasy-adventure with lots of swords, monsters, obstacles, and magical shields and weapons. Like the other TurboGrafx-CD games we've seen so far, however, *Valis II* uses the CD only as a source of better-sounding music and colorful story interludes. The game probably could have appeared on cartridge, albeit with fewer levels — the CD simply offers a story sequence with digitized dialogue at the start of each new level. Some of the newer CD games expected this year (such as Cinemaware's *It Came From the Desert*) will make the story sequences part of the game itself in an interactive way, but so far we haven't seen this approach.

One interesting aspect of *Valis II* is that the warrior is female. Yuko, as she's called, has the Sword of the Kingdom, Valis II — something the evil emperor Magus desperately wants. Yuko gets help from another woman, the ghost Reiko, and a sister who appears at one point as well. While there's no real difference in game play between the male warriors of other games and the female fighter in *Valis II*, it's an interesting twist nonetheless.

Other than the story sequences and the warrior's gender, however, *Valis II* is much like other such games. The graphics are good, it plays quickly, the difficulty levels are appropriate, and it automatically saves your data after you complete each level. It's extremely addictive, too. If you like scrolling, fight-the-monsters, run-jump-and-shoot games, you're sure to like *Valis II*.



1 *Valis II*: Just inside the subway, Yuko comes across a more powerful weapon. These are essential if you hope to succeed.

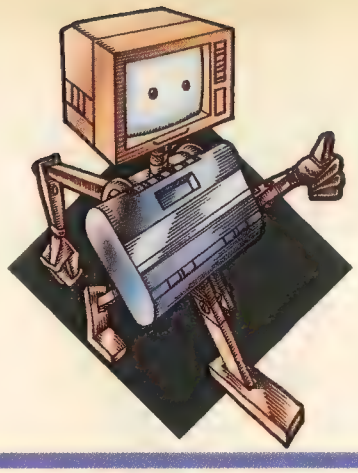
2 *Valis II*: Jumping over a creature, Yuko lets her rotating weapon take care of its destruction. Jump high and often in this game, but don't overuse your special weapons.

3 *Valis II*: With two monsters to defeat, things look grim for Yuko. But a couple of quick shots should take care of everything.

4 *Valis II*: The big boss Zaruga is sure to do a lot of damage. Just keep firing and try to stay away from his blasts.

Between *Valis II*, *Drop Off*, and *Veigues*, my vote goes to *Veigues*. With its repair and refit screen, it offers a strategic option that keeps you in control of the action. It's also the most visually exciting of the three. CD owners will want a look at *Valis II*, but with such excellent CD games as *Ys: Books I and II* and *Jack Nicklaus Turbo Golf* — and still more to come — there's no longer a shortage of CD titles to choose from.

GP



ATARI SAFARI

Rampage

Tom R. Halfhill

Tired of always playing a boring good guy? Maybe it's time you went on a *Rampage*.

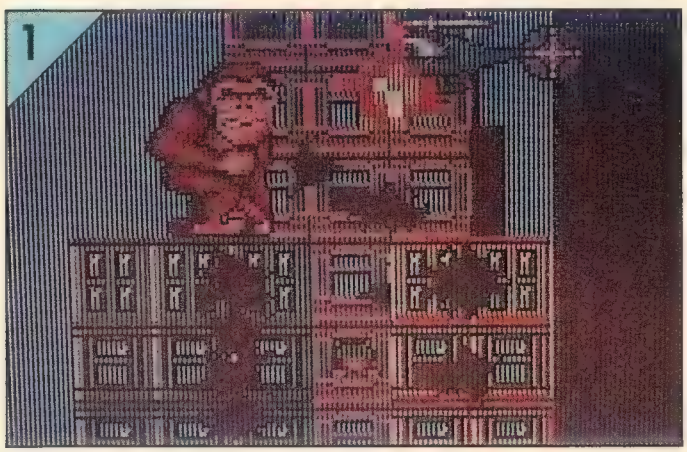
In the new Lynx version of this arcade favorite (also available for Nintendo), you play an irate monster on the warpath. Stomping your way from city to city, you smash buildings, squash police cars and army tanks, swat helicopter gunships, and even munch on unlucky people who get in your way. If you succeed in spreading enough destruction, you advance to the next town.

You weren't always such a nasty critter, though. It all started when a new employee at a chemical factory's cafeteria accidentally mixed an experimental substance with the creamed spinach. Four people who ate the spinach were transformed into giant troublemakers.

The first victim was Larry, the cafeteria cashier and company snitch. He grew into a colossal rat. Then came Ralph, the janitor; he metamorphosed into a huge wolf. Lizzie, the marketing director, became a fire-breathing lizard. And worst of all was Boss George, the chemical factory's top banana — he mutated into an overgrown gorilla.

You can play as any of these four monsters in the Lynx version of *Rampage*. (Note that the arcade version had only three monsters — no giant rat — and the Nintendo version had only two.) With Comlynx cables, two to four people can hook their Lynx systems together and play at once.

1 Don't get so absorbed punching holes in the buildings that you forget to swat the helicopters that fly by — they're worth 1,000 points each.



After you've chosen your brute, it's time to start stompin'. Your first target is Boise, Idaho. Just find the nearest building, climb up the side, and start punching. Each blow knocks out a chunk of the wall. When you reach the roof, cross over and start climbing down the other side, still punching all the way.

Pretty soon the building will start to crumble. When that happens, immediately jump off so you won't fall into the rubble. Then find another building to tackle.

Of course, the local authorities will be upset over your aggressive approach to urban renewal. They'll resist with police, soldiers, tanks, helicopters, and other forces. As their bullets score hits, you lose health points (measured by a gauge on the screen). When your health is gone, your monster briefly turns back into a human, then expires. When you lose three monsters, the game ends.

To boost your health, you can snack on people (either soldiers or innocent bystanders) and swallow various potions hidden in the buildings. But watch out — some potions (and other edibles) are *bad* for your health!

Although the main idea in *Rampage* is to destroy as many cities as you can, a happy ending is possible. Rumor has it that a fugitive lab technician has formulated a cure for your monsteritis. If you can only find him....

Rampage is full of action, but doesn't win any points for variety. Every city looks the same, and the action changes very little as you climb from building to building. It doesn't make much difference which monster you choose, either. In terms of graphics and sound, *Rampage* ranks about average for a Lynx game.

Still, there's no denying that *Rampage* has attracted a crowd of fans over the years, and the Lynx version is a good adaptation. Our advice: Drop a few quarters into the arcade machine first. If you like what you see, you'll probably like the Lynx version, too.

GP

NINTENDO GAME of the MONTH

G.I. JOE
A REAL AMERICAN HERO®

Richard Lashley

For decades, marauding hordes of Cobra thugs have carried out vicious attacks on defenseless targets. If not stopped, Cobra — a sinister organization of international terrorists — will gain a stranglehold on the whole world. The situation is desperate.

But America isn't taking Cobra's blows lying down. The elite G.I. Joe team is doggedly battling the Cobra organization to restore global peace. The entire world is their battlefield.

General Hawk, G.I. Joe's commander, is mustering the team's highly trained specialists to crush Cobra once and for all. If you accept this mission, six stages of guerilla warfare lie ahead. Each stage is divided into three levels: blasting your way to your assigned target, planting your bombs, and then fighting your way out past the enemy boss.

After General Hawk selects the team leader, you pick two more members. Among the commandos at your disposal are Captain Grid-Iron, Rock & Roll, Blizzard, Duke, and Snake Eyes. You decide which men to use for each level.

Lock and load — now you're ready to battle Cobra!

Pick your team according to the needs of each mission. Carefully choose so you have both firepower and agility. In this unit, Captain Grid-Iron (center) supplies firepower while Snake Eyes (bottom) contributes his ninja skills.

Taxan USA, 161 Nortech Parkway, San Jose, CA 95134.

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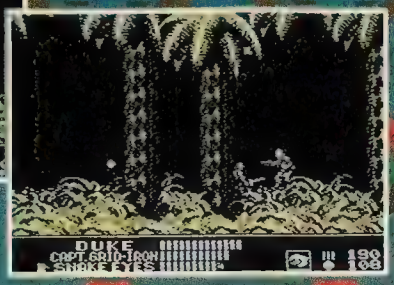
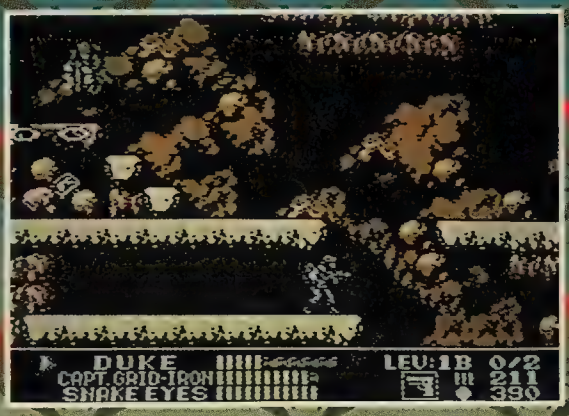
Go for power-ups whenever possible. Only Snake Eyes, with his leaping ability, can reach this gun power-up high in the jungle glade.



Jungle fighting is one of Snake Eyes' specialties. His slashing Katana sword makes short work of this Viper soldier. After defeating him, grab the power-up hidden in the trees above.

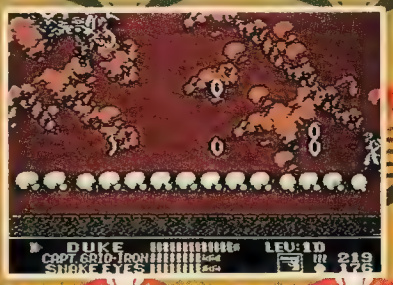
The Cobra Condor Z-25 jet awaits your team at the end of stage 1-1. Duke, the team leader, hurls grenades to knock this bird out of the picture.



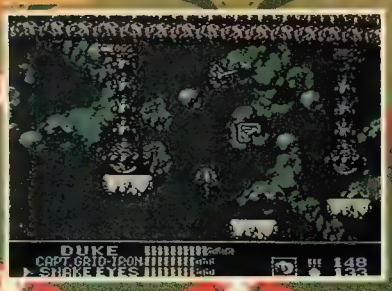
Power-ups for guns, life energy, and ammo are hidden everywhere. At the beginning of stage 1-2, grab the flashing K-ration beneath you to restore full life energy.

The six mission areas are actually mazes. Stage 1 is the easiest — there are only two bomb positions (indicated by check marks) to find. The mazes become more complex in each stage, and you'll also have more bombs to set.

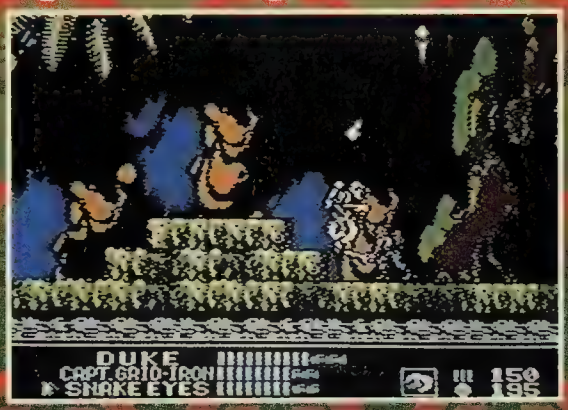
Lots of stamina helps you pull through the tight spots. The chevron-shaped power-ups (upper right) give you extra stamina by extending your life bar.



Raptor and his pet war-eagle (upper left) bring death from above at the end of stage 1-2. Avoid Raptor's swooping attacks by fighting back with Duke's spread gun.

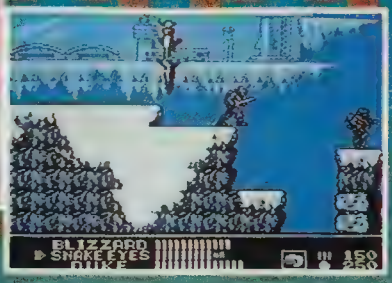


Leaving the mission area in stage 1 is tricky. Snake Eye's agility comes in handy here.

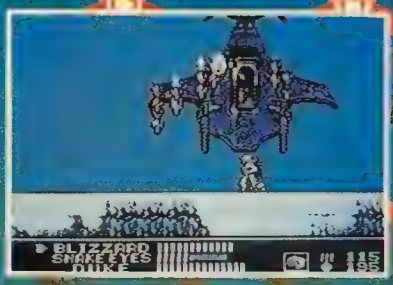


With a black belt in 12 different fighting disciplines, Snake Eyes is hard to beat. His razor-edged Katana sword quickly subdues Range Viper.

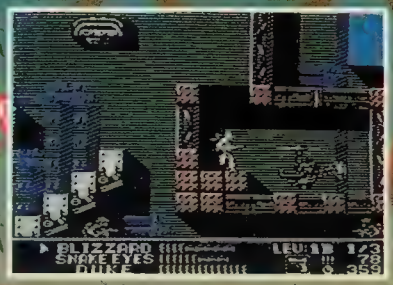
Back at G.I. Joe headquarters, General Hawk briefs you about the next target — a Cobra outpost in the arctic.



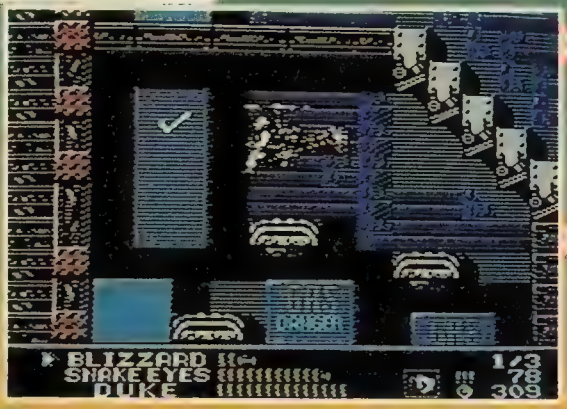
Move quickly when approaching the Cobra outpost in stage 2-1. Guided missiles are constantly launched at you while you battle Cobra's ground troops. Gun power-ups are hidden in the cave below.



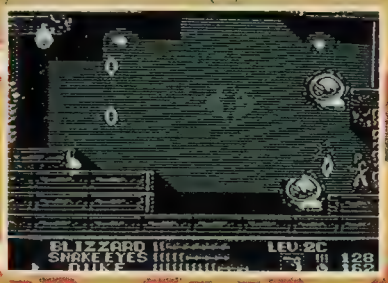
Blizzard is the team leader for the arctic campaign. Keep him powered-up for your fight against the Cobra Sea Ray. Stand underneath the Sea Ray and blast it with grenades.



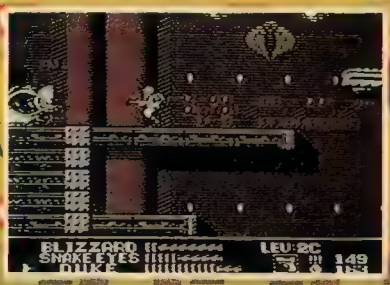
In stage 2-2, you invade the Cobra base. Hop into the Cobra Interrogator — a one-man helicopter.



Being able to fly makes exploring the mazes and finding the check marks a lot easier. You're also invincible while flying—the helicopter suffers damage, not you.



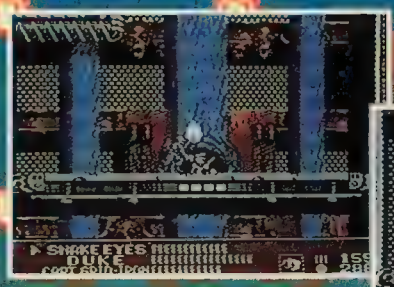
The Cobra Buzz Boar is highly maneuverable and tough to defeat. Duke's fully charged gun is effective against this armored wall-crawler, but you have to move quickly to dodge its saw-like teeth.



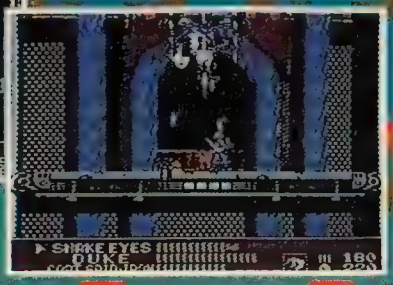
An enemy becomes a friend in stage 2-3. Hop into the Buzz Boar and start climbing some walls.

Metalhead is the most difficult Cobra boss yet. He shoots missiles that explode into huge boulders. It's almost impossible to dodge his attacks, so it's important to have all three team members alive for this battle. Keep changing characters until you finish him off.

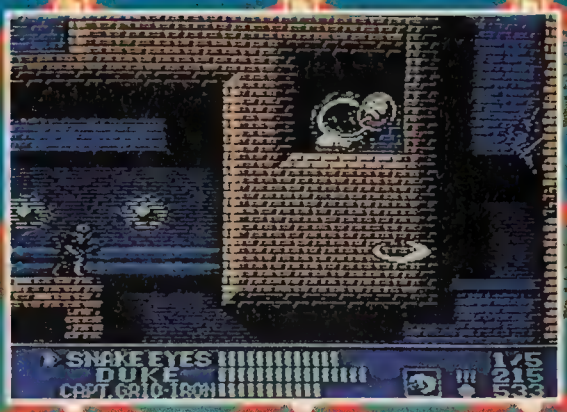
This area will *really* have you climbing the walls. Stay at the top to avoid being knocked down by the helicopters. A deep chasm is beneath you, and no team member can survive that plunge.



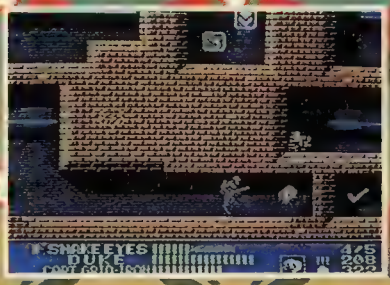
Viper soldiers lurk behind the waterfall at the start of stage 3. Get them before they jump onto your platform and launch missiles at you. Snake Eyes' powerful blows make a great first impression.



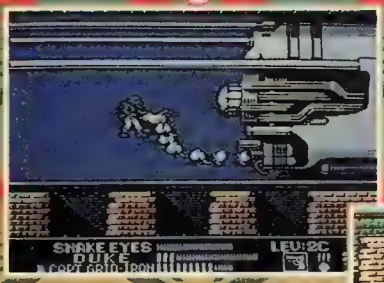
The Cobra Fang boss is vulnerable to grenade attacks from directly beneath him. Use Snake Eyes to deliver a high-explosive assault — he has the fastest arm on the whole G.I. Joe team.



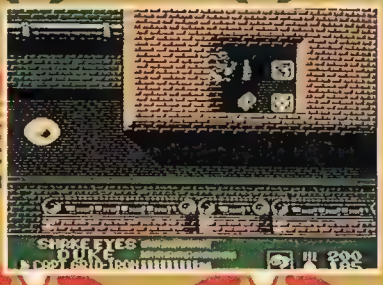
In some mazes you can jump through floors and ceilings, and even climb walls. In stage 3-2, you can avoid the Viper soldier's attack and reach the Buzz Boar by climbing up this wall on the right.



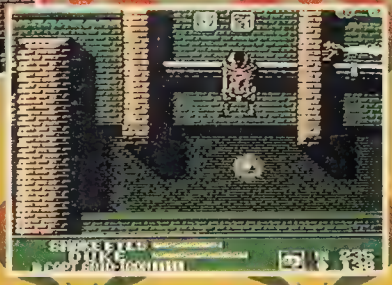
While exploring a dark corridor, Snake Eyes finds a K-ration. Two more power-ups are found in the room directly above.



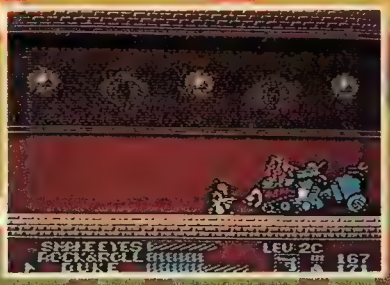
The A.I. Computer boss loves to reach out and kill someone. Avoid its steel grappler by standing in the far left corner. Switch between team members and keep pounding.



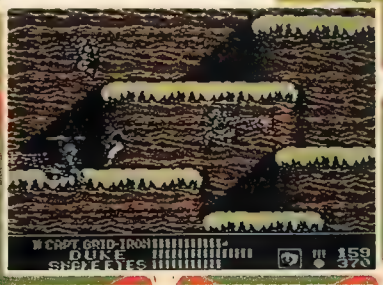
In stage 3-3, sometimes you can reach power-ups from below.



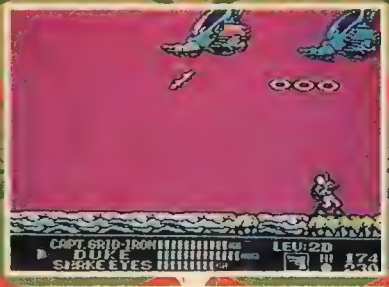
The Cobra Pogo is armed with a multidirectional machine gun and powerful jumping legs. If you can capture this vehicle, it'll be much easier to plant your bombs.



The Overlord & Dictator boss guards the exit from stage 3. This metallic menace launches its cockpit at you like a battering ram. Crouch in front and blaze away with your most powerful gun.

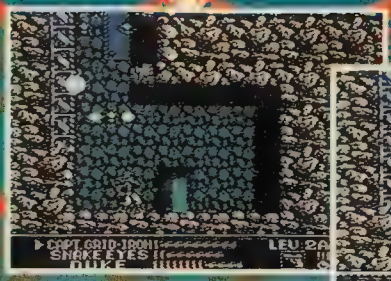


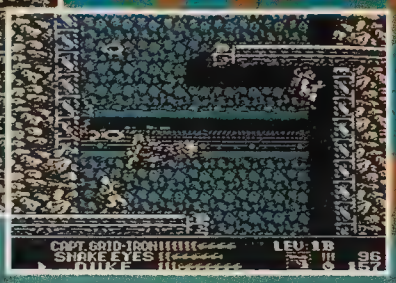
Climb the mountain in stage 4 quickly to avoid being blasted off the slope. As you climb, enemy helicopters are a constant nuisance. Punch them if they get too close.



When you reach the summit, you'll face a deadly game of "King of the Hill." The Anti-Gravity Pod boss duplicates itself when you attack it. Destroy one, then move to the next.... Patience is the key.

After planting your bombs, begin leaving stage 4 by climbing up here. Destroy the guns first, then push on.

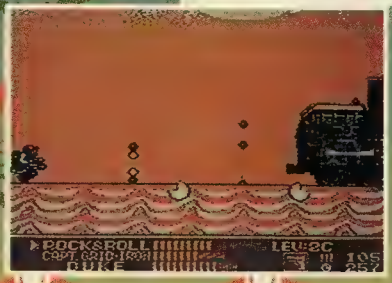




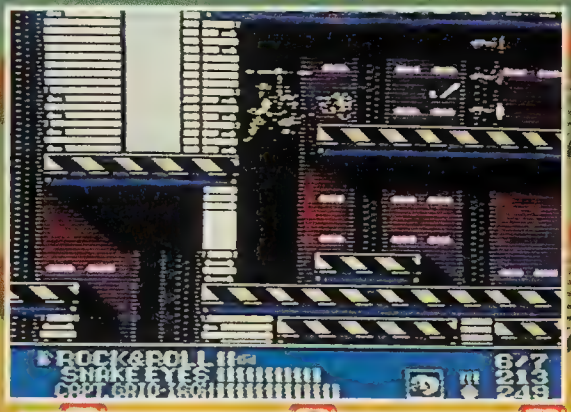
Your path is blocked by Viper soldiers swinging from the cave's ceiling and by enemy helicopters. This is a tricky section to navigate.

Voltar is a very predictable boss. High-voltage beams shooting from the walls are his main weapons. Just before he fires a beam, the wall starts to glow. Watch for this, then leap to a different level.

The war heats up fast in stage 5, where your target is a Cobra base in the desert. Swat down this enemy attack chopper by knocking out its guns.

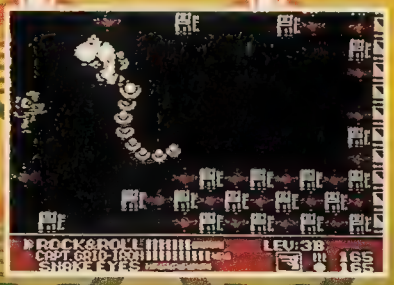


Rock & Roll's powerful guns qualify him to lead the desert assault. Use them to exterminate this Cobra Bugg sent out to intercept your squad.

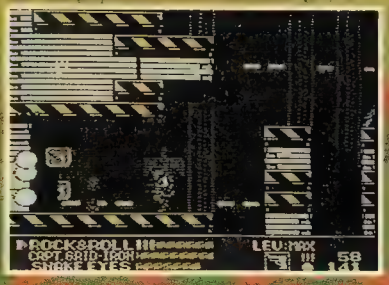


Inside the desert base are some intricate defenses. In this area, missile launchers protect one of the base's soft spots.

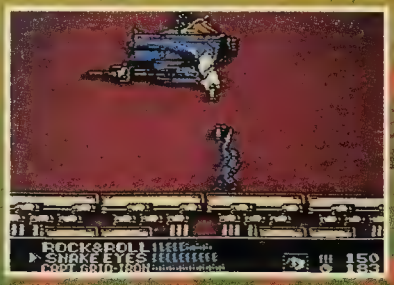
The Golubulus boss at the end of stage 5-2 is colorful but deadly. Stand on a ledge against the wall and use your most powerful gun against him.



General Hawk, your fearless leader, leads you into the final battle in stage 6. You'll be going blow-for-blow with the Cobra Commander himself. If you thought the past battles were tough, you ain't seen nothin' yet!



A good strategy is always to keep one team member fully charged, especially near the end of the game. Try to keep Rock & Roll and his powerful gun charged and ready.



Destro is an unforgiving boss. Use your most powerful gun to blast him out of his gunship. Then the real fight begins.

GP

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Legend of Kage	10/16
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Mega Man II	22/36
Mega Man III	26/42
*Mendel Palace	24/39
Metal Fighter	22/36
Metal Gear	3/8
Metal Mech	24/39
Metroid	6/12
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Milon's Sec Castle	10/16
Mission Cobra	12/19
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*Pinball Quest	24/39
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Rad Racer II	16/26
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STRIDER

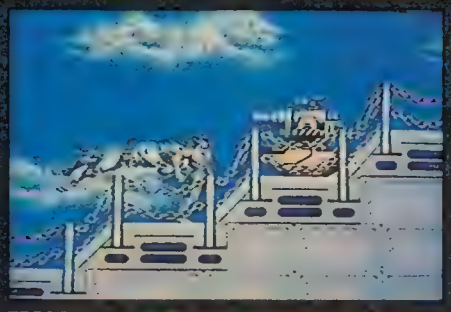
Matthew A. Firme

The 21st century began as the most hopeful and promising era in the history of Earth. Global conflict had given way to global cooperation, and the people of every nation prepared for a new and prosperous way of life.

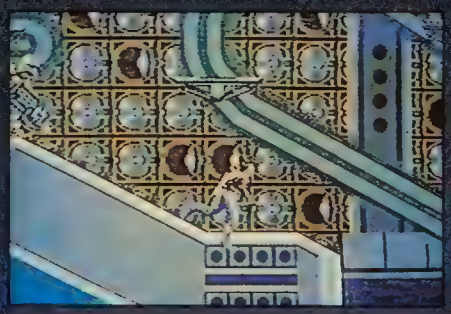
Then one day a fleet of strange spaceships was sighted over the European nation of Kazafu. Soon a full-scale alien invasion was underway. The aliens, lead by the heinous Grand Master Meio, leveled Kazafu and surged across the entire continent. Soon the aliens held all of Europe.

On the small island of Moralos, the Striders — an elite band of warriors — received news of the invasion. They sent Hiryu, the youngest man ever to become an A-class Strider, to defeat Meio's hordes.

In Part 1 in last month's issue of *Game Player's*, we left Hiryu as he boarded Meio's flying fortress, the *Ballog*.

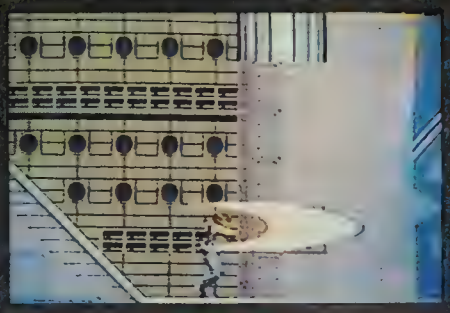


Slash at the cannons on the *Ballog*'s upper deck from this position. The shots will soar harmlessly over your head.

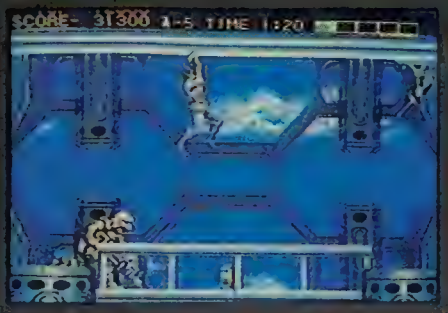


Once you've destroyed the deck guns, you'll have to smash the wall and leap down into the belly of the ship. Move carefully and strike quickly amidst these whirring platforms.

Move to the right and then up. As soon as you reach this upper deck, kneel and begin slashing at this guard droid.

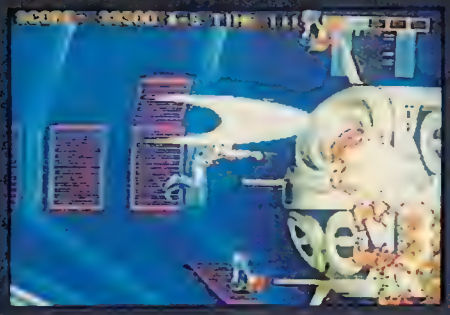


Smash through this wall and keep moving to the right.



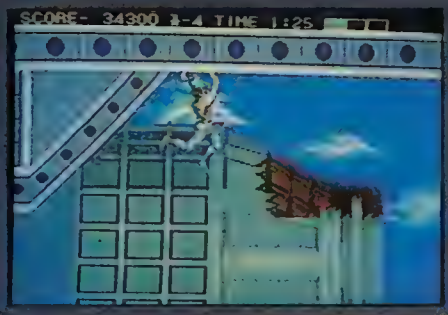
You'll come to a narrow tunnel lined with machinery, guards, and lasers. Move along the ceiling to avoid the guards below. Don't overlook the lasers mounted on the ceiling.

Inside this antigravity chamber is an amazing engine circled by exploding satellites.

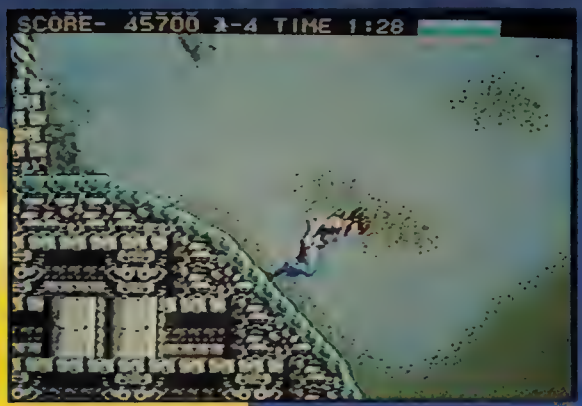


To destroy the antigravity unit, leap toward it and allow yourself to be pulled into orbit around it. Strike the machine repeatedly as you orbit.

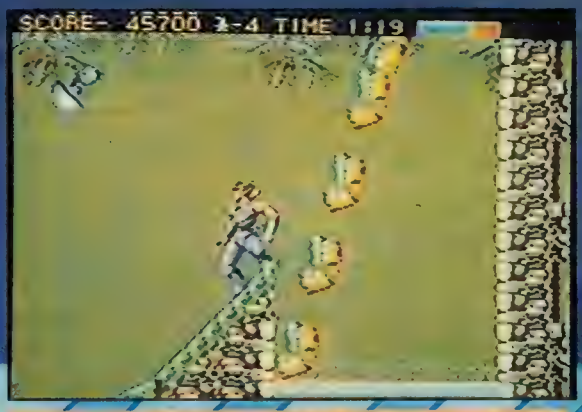
When the antigravity unit explodes, leap through a hole in the bottom of the chamber. Move quickly! The *Ballog* won't stay in the air much longer.



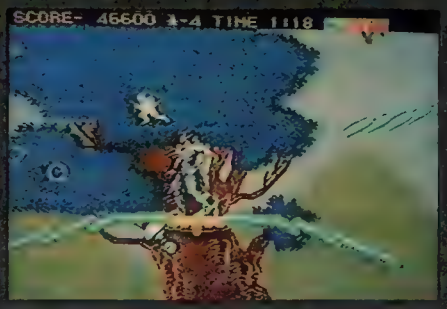
After dropping through the hole, leap up and move to the right, hand over hand. Speed is of the essence — when the *Ballog* bursts into flames, you'll have to stay ahead of the fire or be trapped.



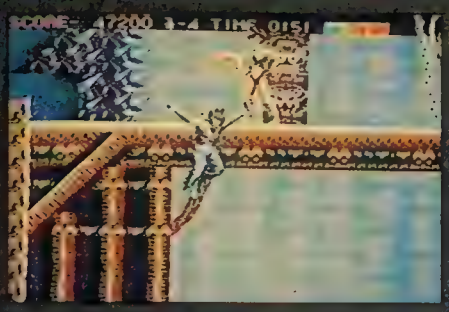
Next stop: the Amazon. These lush jungles harbor danger as well as beauty.



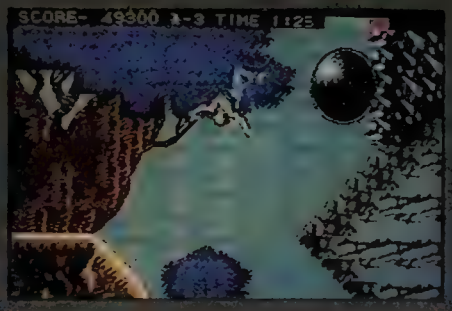
Don't rush up this wall on the far side of the first valley — it will begin to fall away as soon as you step on it. Instead, edge a step up the wall, then run back down as soon as it begins to tumble.



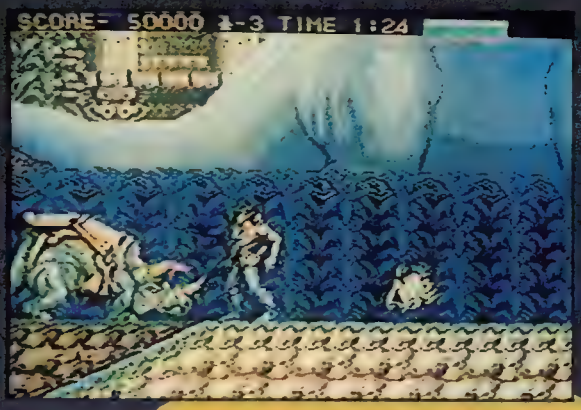
Gather all the power capsules you can. The invincibility symbol will make Strider immune to attack for a few moments.



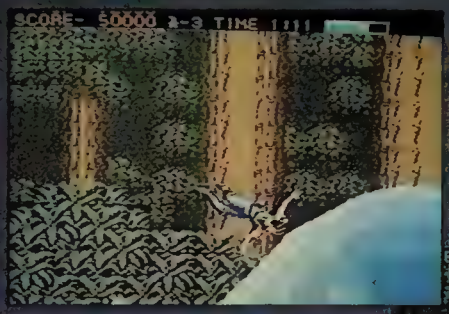
As you leap higher into the canopy of the rain forest, you'll run into these Amazon warriors. Don't underestimate them — they're quick and expert with their weapons.



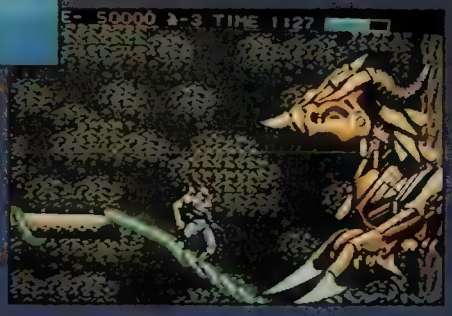
Carefully time your leap across this gap. A huge boulder will tumble down from the right, and it can knock you into the piranha-infested waters below.

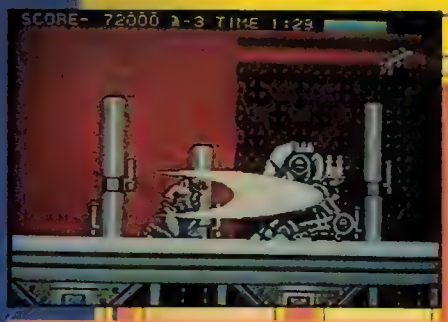


When you reach the ground, don't bother trying to attack the triceratops. Odd as it seems, the safest place for now is on the back of the enormous brachiosaurus.

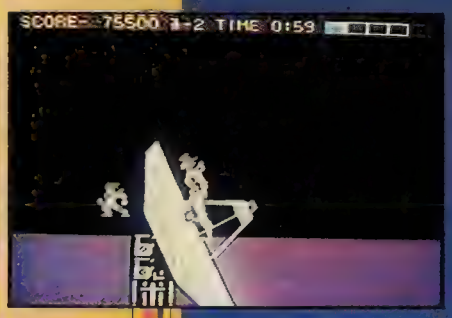


Leap onto the back of the next dinosaur. That way you can reach the high branch and attack the Lago robot safely.

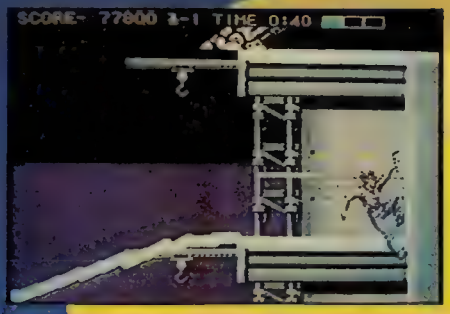




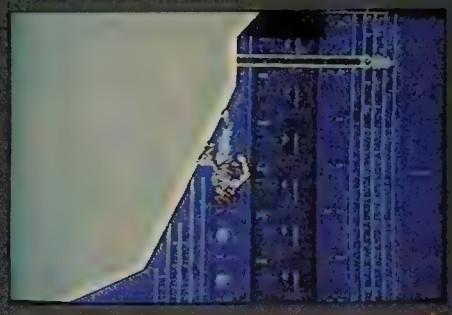
Finally, Hiryu reaches the Third Moon, Master Meio's headquarters. Only your best gaming skills will make it possible for you to survive this tough stage.



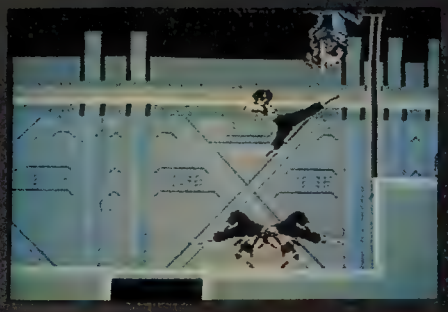
Behind the highest satellite you'll find an extra life. You'll need it!



From the satellite dish, battle your way up and to the right. This robot blocks your path, and he's very hard to defeat. It's best to climb up behind him and slip past.

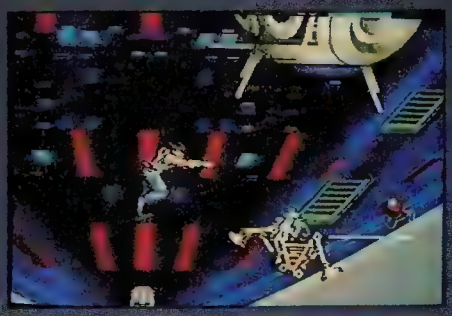


Here's another area of upside-down gravity. Move carefully — one slip can cost you a life.

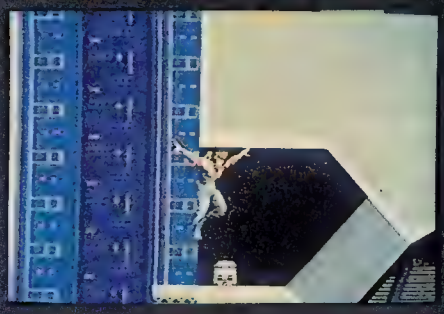


If you leap too soon, you'll end up in this room with three deadly martial-arts experts. Stay low in the top right corner, standing to attack only when the fighters are moving *away* from you.

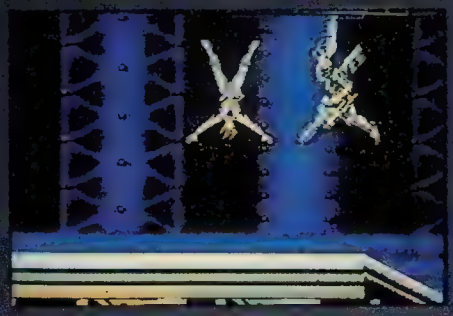
There's no way to avoid these razor-sharp spears. You'll have to move *between them*, carefully edging forward and stopping before the next spear rises.



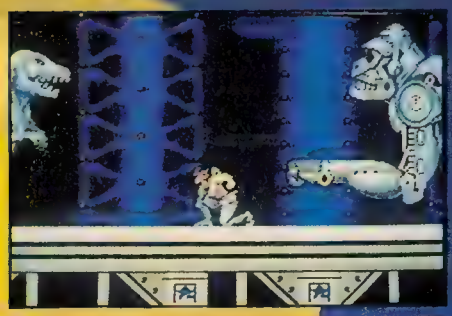
You must destroy a second anti-gravity unit, this one guarded by two robots on the floor. Eliminate the robots first, then smash the explosive satellites.



You'll fall through the bottom of the chamber and down a long shaft. If you don't manage to land on this platform to the right, you'll plunge to your doom.

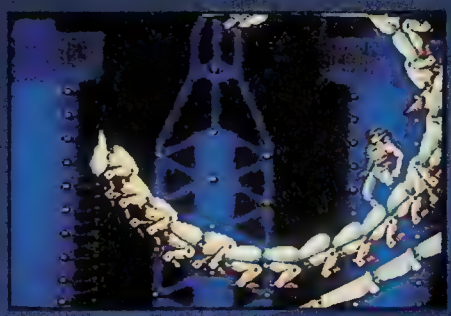


Once again you must battle the agile Solo robot. And this time he's even tougher.



Mecha Pon and the dreaded Tyrannosaurus gang up on you after you've beaten Solo. Concentrate your attack on Mecha Pon, always pressing toward the right of the screen.

This sparkle announces the return of Lago. Don't try to fight him from behind.



Here's Urobolos again. Leap onto his back and let him take you to your final destination — the Supreme Tower, where you'll face the ultimate confrontation with Grand Master Meio.

KING'S QUEST V

Absence Makes the Heart Go Yonder

Leslie Mizell

You bought a VGA graphics board. And you waited. Each time Sierra released a new graphics adventure, you rushed to the store. Would this be the one? Would this be the time that Sierra finally joined the other software companies and embraced VGA graphics?

The wait is over. *King's Quest V*, the latest chapter in Roberta Williams's long-running saga, has amazing VGA graphics. So amazing, in fact, that unless you're using a computer with the speed of an 80386 processor, you'll spend a lot more time looking at the graphics than you might like. On all but the fastest computers, this game runs *slooowww*.

What makes this especially surprising is that, aside from the main characters, there's not much animation going on. The forest is foggy, but the fog doesn't drift. Waterfalls don't splash. The screens look more like static paintings — which is exactly what they are. This is the first *King's Quest* game that uses digitized paintings for backdrops instead of computer artwork. The result is a very distinctive — if inanimate — look.

The story adheres more closely to tradition. By this fifth *King's Quest* game, each of the ruling members of Daventry (King Graham, Queen Valanice, Prince Alexander, and Princess Rosella) has starred in his or her own adventure. Now the cycle is beginning again. King Graham returns from a pleasant walk through the woods to find that his entire castle, royal family and all, has been whisked away.

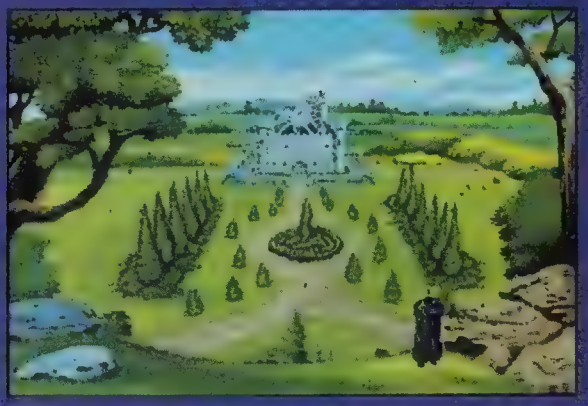
An owl named Cedric tells the king what happened: Mordack, a powerful wizard, spirited the royal family to his castle in a far-away land. Cedric takes King Graham to a man named Crispin, who is the owl's owner and a has-been magician. Crispin arms King Graham with a fizzled-out magic wand and sends Cedric with him to rescue the royal family.

The action in *King's Quest V* will be familiar to anyone who has played the previous adventures. During the first part of the game it's important to gather items and help other characters, who eventually show up later in the game to return the favor. After completing these early tasks and acquiring a strong inventory, you enter a section that's more traditional to graphics-adventure games — encountering danger and finally overcoming the evil.

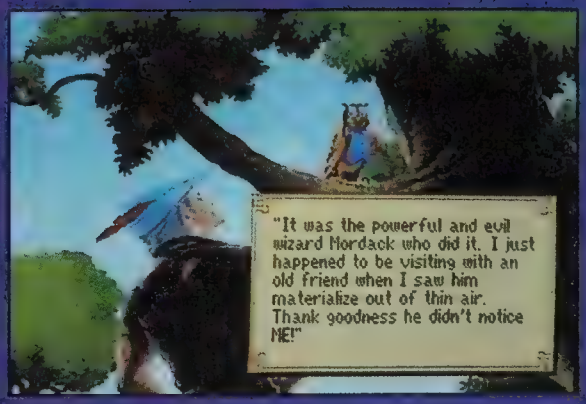
King's Quest V, however, introduces a new form of interaction. Instead of typing in each command on the keyboard, you select an icon that rotates among the Walk, Look, Talk, and Manipulate commands. The new system has its pros and cons, but it certainly makes a mouse more necessary than ever before.

Enjoyable for loyal fans and newcomers alike, *King's Quest V* ushers in a new age for Sierra games. Whether or not you believe it was worth the wait, however, will be a matter of personal taste.

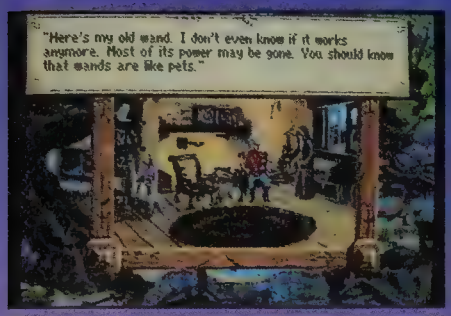
COMPUTER GAME of the MONTH



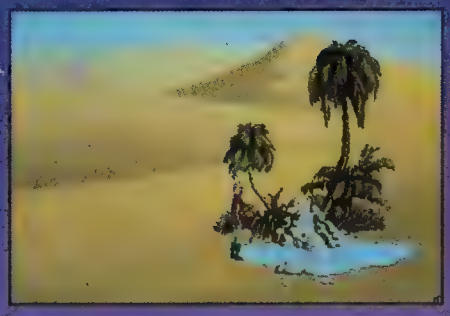
As the game begins, the evil magician Mordack spirits away Castle Daventry. King Graham returns from a walk to find that his home and family have vanished.


"It was the powerful and evil wizard Mordack who did it. I just happened to be visiting with an old friend when I saw him materialize out of thin air. Thank goodness he didn't notice ME!"

Cedric the owl is your companion throughout *King's Quest V*. He's an occasional help, but you'll be rescuing *him* from danger more often than the other way around.



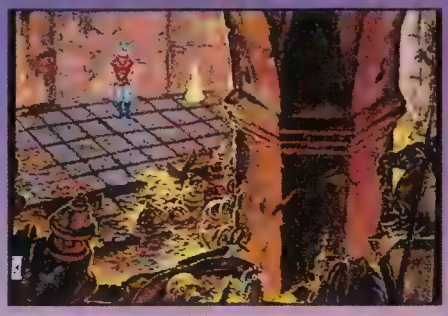
Crispin gives you some advice before you set out on your journey. He also gives you his old wand — but most of its magic has fizzled out.



The desert is one of three areas in *King's Quest V* that you must map. Mark any oases you find and return to them before you die of thirst.

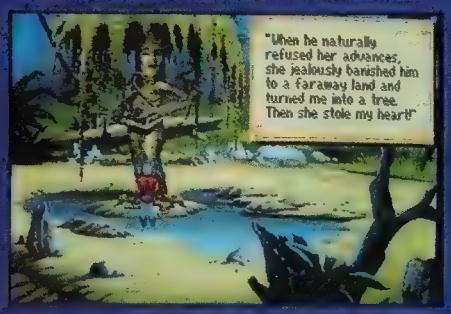
Grab a drink at the temple, then hide until the horsemen arrive. If you watch them carefully, you'll see how to get to the gold inside.

You're not in much danger at the caravan. All of the nomads are either asleep, drunk, or watching the entertainment. Still, watch your step.

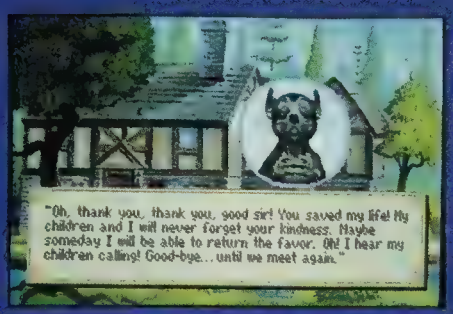


If you're not careful, you'll find that greedy kings are *dead* kings. Get the two items you need from inside the temple and beat a hasty retreat.

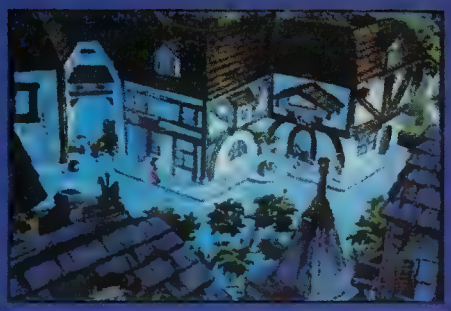
When you return from the desert, pay the gypsy to tell your fortune. She can provide some details about why Mordack kidnapped your family.


"When he naturally refused her advances, she jealously banished him to a faraway land and turned me into a tree. Then she stole my heart!"

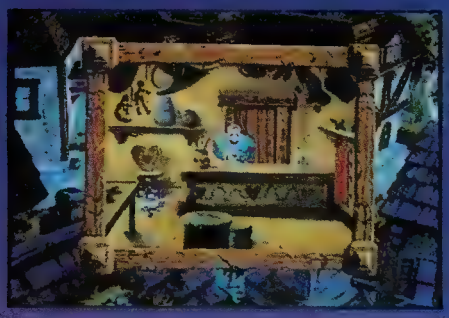
The white snake that Crispin fed you gives you the power to talk to animals and plants. To earn the harp from this princess/willow, you must first find her heart.


"Oh, thank you, thank you, good sir! You saved my life! My children and I will never forget your kindness. Maybe someday I will be able to return the favor. Oh! I hear my children calling! Good-bye... until we meet again."

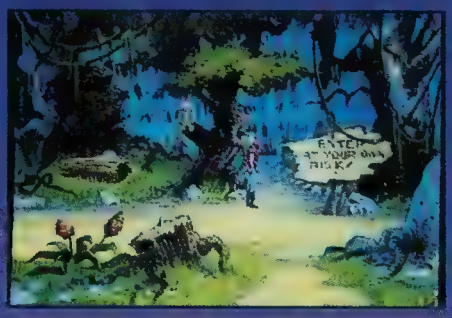
Rescuing underdogs should be a way of life for you. The help of a mouse, an ant, an eagle, and a swarm of bees are all vital to your success later in the game.



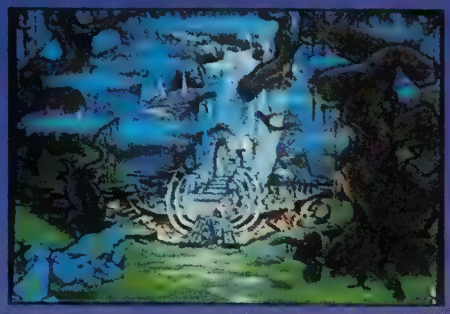
After you've wandered a bit through the woods, go into town and visit the shops. There are also two items you must find in the streets and alleys.



Once you've visited the tailor, the toymaker, and the cobbler, some of the pieces of the *King's Quest V* jigsaw should start falling into place. A marionette, for example, would be valuable to the toymaker.



The witch of the forest means what she says. Don't forget to save your game often.

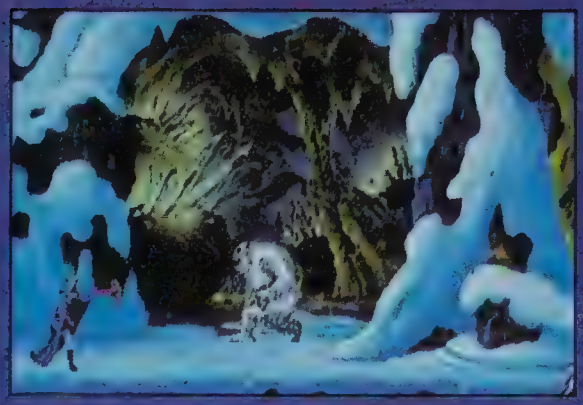


Once you've dispensed with the witch, searched her cottage, and retrieved the willow's heart, exit to your left. Trick an elf to find your way out of the forest.

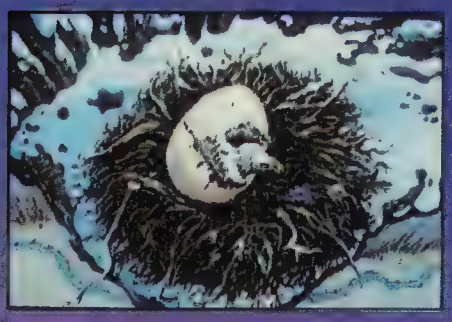
Your strange inventory contains everything from a custard pie to a lump of beeswax. Believe it or not, you'll need everything you've picked up.

When Cedric is carried off by a wolf, you have only one choice — to follow him. Fortunately, you have hidden skills when it comes to sledding.

Cedric hasn't become wolf chow yet, but the two of you may become a meal if you can't deal with the yeti that has invaded Icebella's territory.



In case you didn't know, yetis are powerful but clumsy. It shouldn't be too hard to upset his abominable equilibrium. Then dash into the cave for a quick crystal.

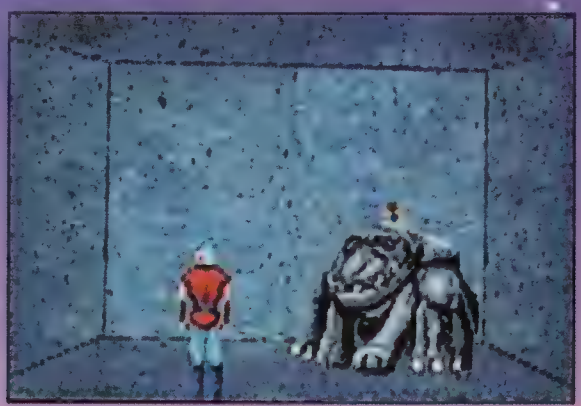


First wolf chow, now bird seed. But if you shared your food with the starving eagle, you won't end up as an entre just yet.

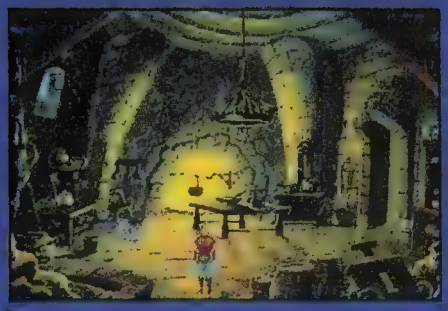
Funny, this didn't look like Loch Ness. But these waters are teeming with serpents, so map your progress and don't head for the islands visible on the horizon.

It shouldn't be too difficult to escape the clutches of these lovely ladies. After all, they don't call them harpies for nothing.

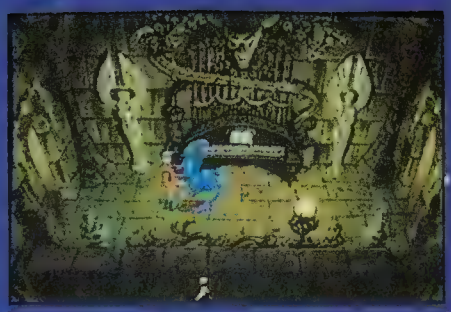
When Cedric is injured, you'd better rush him back to the hermit on shore. But unless you've got a royal hearing aid, you should pick up a sea shell on the way.



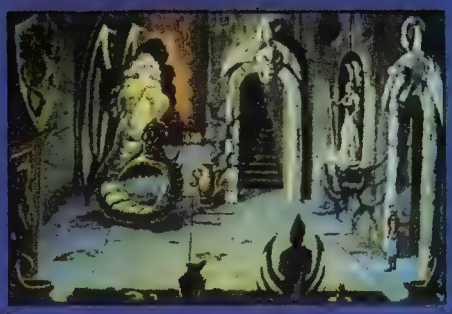
Mordack's dungeons are almost impossible to map, so try wandering around. You need to get a hairpin from Dink before you can pick the lock on the castle door.



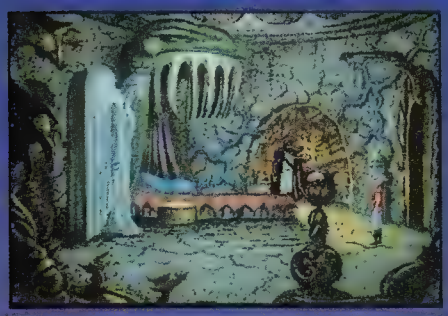
This princess doesn't seem to be enjoying her finishing school, so maybe you should help her. She looks like a perfect daughter-in-law — but not unless you all make it to *King's Quest VI*.



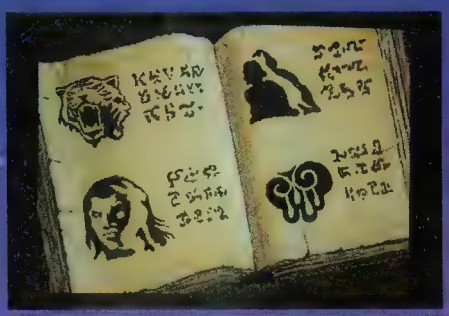
This blue beast appears at random throughout the castle. You *must* allow him to capture you once, because you need something from the dungeon. But getting captured a second time puts a quick end to your adventure.



The castle is lovely, but you don't have time to look around. You won't need to find any items outside the dungeon and the pantry.



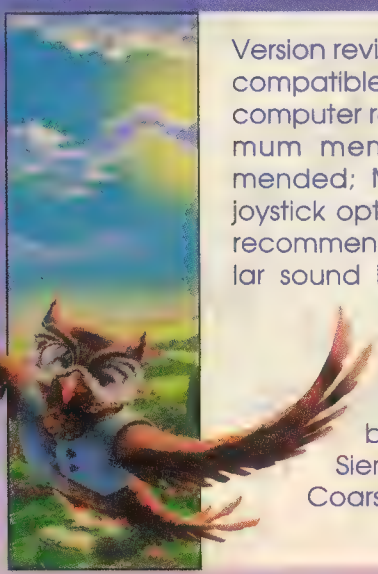
Mordack himself appears when you've forgotten to do something — like bribe his black cat. When the evil wizard pops in, it's curtains for you.



Search Mordack's study long enough to find these spells. Now you have the knowledge to defeat the wizard — if only you had the magical power.

Wait in Mordack's study until he comes into his bedroom for a nap. Then grab his wand and get ready for the old switcheroo down in his lab.

When Mordack shows up, it's time for a showdown. Regal use of Crispin's wand and Mordack's spells will finally free your family.



Version reviewed: IBM PC, Tandy, and compatibles (16-megahertz or faster computer recommended); 640K minimum memory; hard disk recommended; MCGA or VGA graphics; joystick optional; mouse optional but recommended; supports most popular sound boards. Also available in separate versions for EGA/MCGA graphics, or CGA, EGA, Tandy 16-color, and Hercules graphics. Soon to be released for the Amiga. Sierra On-Line, P.O. Box 495, Coarsegold, CA 93614.

GP

NINTENDO REVIEWS

MAGICIAN

Phill Powell

Version reviewed: Nintendo. Taxan USA, 161 Nortech Parkway, San Jose, CA 95134.

Stage magic isn't very practical. Sure, it might be spectacular to make an elephant disappear, but how often do you need to do that in everyday life? Also, isn't sawing someone in half illegal in most states? And why would you want to keep a rabbit in your hat, anyway?

The spells and sorcery in *Magician*, on the other hand, are far more useful. In this fantasy adventure, you use your powers to shoot lightning bolts at enemies, purify your drinking water, and save your homeland. Real magic for real people.

When *Magician* begins, you assume the role of Paul, an ambitious teenager from a small town. In your country, Merlwood, a magician is just about the coolest thing you can be, and you're an eager apprentice. But before you can attain this lofty rank, you must prove yourself. You do this by embarking on a quest through the countryside, fighting villains and honing your magic powers.

Unfortunately, the evil wizard Abadon has ambitions, too. He wants to control Merlwood and terrorize its citizens. His powers are mighty, and he is focusing all of his efforts on defeating one opponent — you.

Don't feel pressured, though. If you defeat him, you'll achieve your life's dream of becoming a magician. If you fail, it's all over for Merlwood. Other than that, nothing else is riding on the contest.

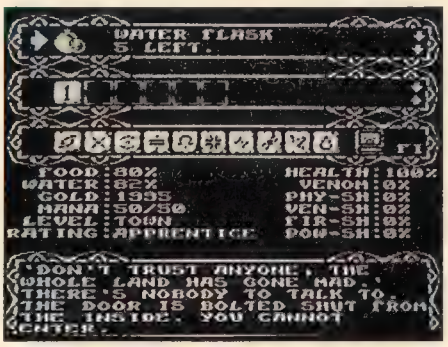
Of course, your big showdown with Abadon doesn't happen right away. *Magician* has eight stages, and you'll spend much of your time walking through villages and forests, picking up handy bonus items and pieces of information. The inventory screen displays your levels of strength and endurance, and also shows the collection of spells you've acquired. You'll come across assorted enemies to vanquish, and fighting them helps prepare you for your title bout with Abadon.

Magician is a little uneven in its pacing — the action scenes thin out noticeably in the middle of the game, then pick up again in the later stages. The graphics are a bit unbalanced, too. Some scenes look great, while others appear murky or unrealized.

Although it's a nice introduction to role-playing games for beginning and intermediate players, *Magician* needs more hocus-pocus to challenge experienced adventurers.

GP

In *Magician*, enemies come in many forms — both animal *and* vegetable. The strange hybrid at the far right is a Pythonoplant.


WATER FLASK
5 LEFT.
FOOD : 80%
WATER : 82%
GOLD : 1935
MANA : 50/50
LEVEL : TOWN
RATING : APPRENTICE
HEALTH : 100%
VENOM : 0%
PHY-SH : 0%
VEN-SH : 0%
FIR-SH : 0%
POW-SH : 0%
"DON'T TRUST ANYONE. THE WHOLE LAND HAS GONE MAD. THERE'S NOBODY TO TALK TO. THE DOOR IS BOLTED SHUT FROM THE INSIDE. YOU CANNOT ENTER."

The inventory screen keeps a running tally of what you've collected and how you're doing.

Defeat the Manubat by mixing fireballs with the Staff of Power.

NINTENDO REVIEWS

BANDIT KINGS OF ANCIENT CHINA

William R. Trotter

Version reviewed: Nintendo. Also available for Amiga and IBM, Tandy, and compatible computers. Koei, One Bay Plaza, Suite 540, 1350 Bayshore Highway, Burlingame, CA 94010.

Each time Koei translates one of its epic historical simulations from PC to Nintendo format, the results improve. So it is with the elaborate and subtle *Bandit Kings of Ancient China.*

Every important feature of the PC version is here, complemented by sharp, fine-grained graphics. The battle scenes are more detailed and the scrolling is *much* smoother than in previous Koei games for Nintendo.

In *Bandit Kings*, you play a chieftain in 12th-century China who must eliminate an evil warlord before barbarians invade from the north. The basic gaming system remains the same as in other Koei games (*Nobunaga's Ambition, Romance of the Three Kingdoms, Genghis Khan*). Each "month" of game time, you issue one command from a long list of military, economic, and political options.

Bandit Kings has a few refinements, however. Most importantly, each action you take now costs a certain amount of physical stamina. When your character's strength gets too low, he must rest and recover before doing more. As a result, it's vital to delegate authority and find reliable subordinates early in the game.

Another difference is the game's overall philosophy. In previous Koei games, the outcome was open-ended — survival and expansion were the main goals, and some games lasted long enough to span dynasties. But in *Bandit Kings*, you have a definite goal: to kill Gai Qiu, the evil despot. Furthermore, you have only 25 years of game time in which to do it, or else you'll be invaded by the barbarians.

Because *Bandit Kings* plays on a more intimate scale than the other Koei games, individual personality traits are very important. Your chances of recruiting or forming an alliance with a valuable hero are greatly improved if the two characters have compatible personalities.

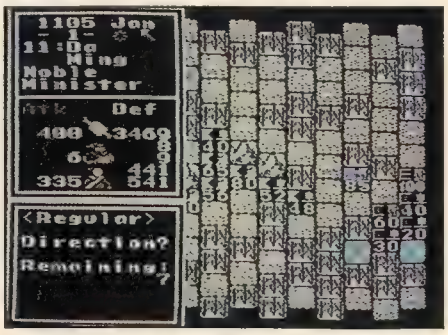
Like any real chieftain, you must also learn to make clear-minded, realistic judgments about your subordinates, even as you take steps to cement their loyalty — which, in the world of 12th-century China, usually meant a liberal donation of gold.

Bandit Kings, like its predecessors, is a deep, sophisticated, utterly absorbing game of strategy on the grandest scale.

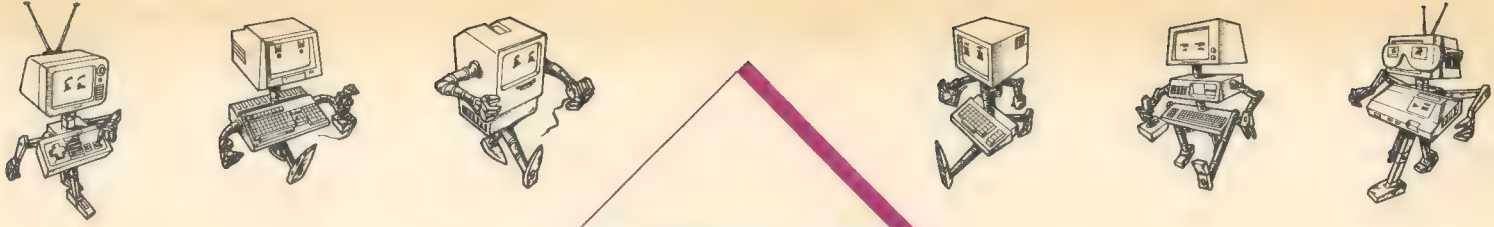
GP

Characters in *Bandit Kings* are based on actual figures from the 12th-century Song Dynasty.

Try to settle your hero in a province that's not next to one controlled by Gai Qiu, the evil despot.



The graphics in battle scenes are lovely — note the bare, snow-covered look of this winter landscape.



NEC REVIEWS

BRAVOMAN

Jeff Lundrigan

Version reviewed: NEC TurboGrafx-16. NEC Technologies, 1255 Michael Drive, Wood Dale, IL 60191.

Once he was an ordinary human named Arnold—until the evil Dr. Bomb arrived. When Dr. Bomb activated his most infernal device, the aptly named End the World Weapon, Earth's future looked bleak. Then a friendly alien from the planet Alpha transformed Arnold into the cybernetic superhero Bravoman. As Bravoman, Arnold set off to find and stop Dr. Bomb—and only a million or so of Dr. Bomb's creatures stand in his way.

The evil Dr. Bomb, the world's most diabolical mad scientist, wants to take over the world. Only the cybernetic Bravoman can defeat him.

Bravoman is easily one of the silliest games to be released for the NEC TurboGrafx-16 in quite awhile. Everytime Bravoman throws a punch, he shouts "Bravo!" And between each stage, you're treated to the spectacle of Dr. Bomb waving his dagger in the air and saying over and over (in his sternest mad-scientist voice), "I'm Dr. Bomb!"

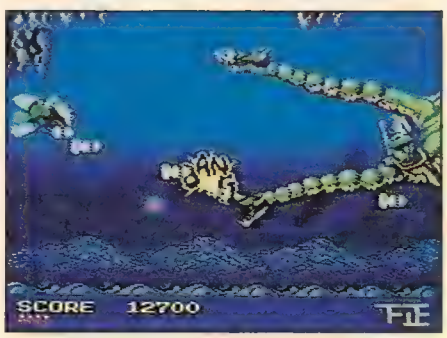
Don't get the idea that *Bravoman* isn't an enjoyable game, though. The graphics are goofy, but they're also colorful and well-done, and the action provides a good challenge without becoming frustrating.

Because Bravoman is a cybernetic hero, his arms and legs telescope outward when he punches and kicks. His neck does, too, when he delivers the famous "Bravo Head-Butt." During the underwater sequences, Bravoman becomes a kind of living submarine, even to the point of firing torpedoes.

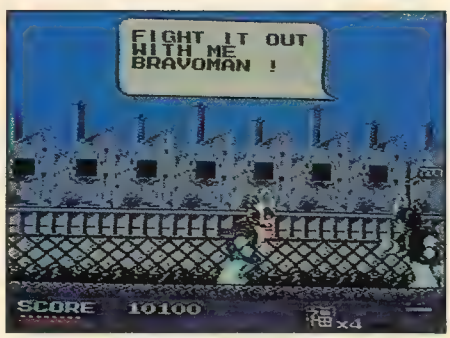
When certain enemies are destroyed, they leave behind a fragment of the Luck Symbol. When Bravoman collects enough fragments, a robot appears to give him various power items. Although these items include such things as super punch power, Bravoman usually gets food (typically sushi or ramen noodles) to restore his life energy. Like several other NEC games, *Bravoman* doesn't try to hide its Japanese origins — in fact, the luck fragments are untranslated Japanese symbols.

The only real flaw in *Bravoman* is that you have absolutely no control over what power items the robot gives you. It appears to be a totally random process. Since a number of these items — such as invincibility or the Super Wave Action Bullets — are powerful enough to carry you through some sections with ease, blind luck is a major factor in the game. Aside from that, *Bravoman* is a winner that combines challenging game play with an enjoyably ridiculous sense of humor.

GP



The underwater sequences add variety to the usual punch-and-kick action — and yes, some enemies really go "Bang!" when you hit them.



At the end of some stages, Bravoman must battle an enemy that looks suspiciously familiar. Is this dark double a friend or a foe?

NINTENDO REVIEWS

ROLLERGAMES

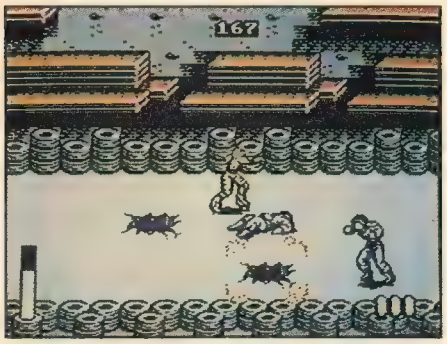
Phill Powell

Version reviewed: Nintendo. Ultra, 900 Deerfield Parkway, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089.

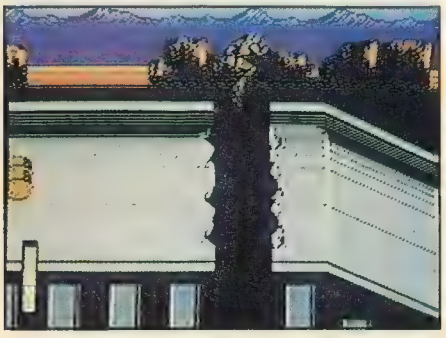
It's a sports-crazy world. Even though it's possible to turn on the TV at nearly any hour and catch some type of athletic event, people just can't seem to satisfy their appetite for sports action.

But sports fans will become even more frantic in the world of the future. In the next century, professional athletics will be dominated by a dangerous new sport — RollerGames. These are roller derbies raced and fought *outside* an arena.

In Ultra's *RollerGames*, the contests take place in six different locales, including an urban landscape, an automobile factory, and (in an amazing leap of distance) a tropical jungle.



Rolling Thunder, who plays for the Hot Flash team, leaves one competitor floored and another shaking in his skates.

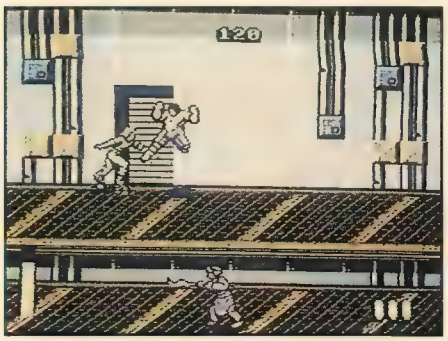


The Regional Freeway stage is studded with obstacles and gaps in the road.

Your ultimate destination is the headquarters of VIPER (Vicious International Punks and Eternal Renegades). As with all professional sports, great sums of money are at stake. VIPER has a catastrophic plan for seizing the mountains of prize money.

First, they've kidnapped the RollerGames commissioner, who's now powerless to stop VIPER from corrupting the tournament. Also, three RollerGames teams have been enlisted to help VIPER do its dirty work. Along with their foul play, you'll have to contend with such unexpected dangers as flame jets, sinkholes, and oil slicks.

Fortunately, you have three unique skaters at your command. Each specializes in a certain type of rolling warfare. As team captain, you decide who skates when, depending on which skills you need in different areas.



Ice Box, your team member from the Thunderbirds, has 128 seconds to clean house with his patented full-body attack.

Another pleasing feature of *RollerGames* is its two types of scrolling. Most of the stages let you move in eight different directions, and the screen scrolls accordingly. These stages have a time limit, and the emphasis is on removing enemies. Two stages, however, automatically scroll to the right. Speed and maneuvering take on greater importance in those sections.

It's easy to get started with *RollerGames*, and it's quite enjoyable to play. The graphics don't hold any surprises, but they don't obscure the fun, either. The two types of scrolling help keep the action lively.

Whether you're interested in the skating or the fighting, *RollerGames* gives you plenty of both — plus a playing season that lasts as long as you like.

GP

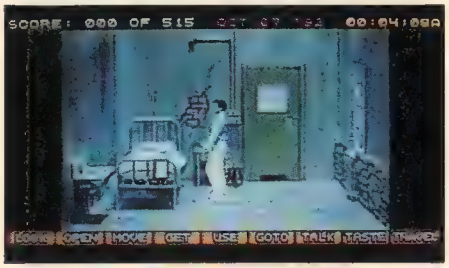
REVIEWS

COUNTDOWN

Gary Meredith

Version reviewed: IBM, Tandy, and compatibles (eight-megahertz 80286 or faster computer recommended); 640K minimum memory; MCGA or VGA graphics; most sound boards supported; joystick and mouse optional. Access Software, 545 West 500 South, Suite 130, Bountiful, UT 84010

You're almost positive that waking up in a dark, dingy cell in some nondescript foreign country is not part of your daily routine. Unfortunately, that's the *only* thing you're sure of. It seems your memory has decided to take a vacation elsewhere, leaving you to piece together your identity and the reason why you're here.



When you finally escape your cell, remember you'll have to find some way of convincing the guard you're still there.

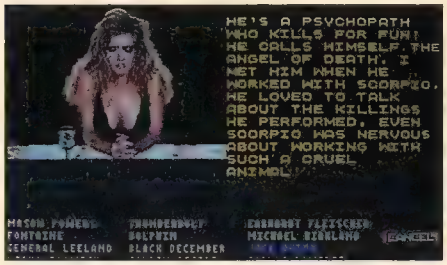
As you engineer your escape, the shards of your shattered past begin to reassemble. You are Mason Powers, once a trusted member of the Central Intelligence Agency. The last thing you recall is the murder of your friend, Frank McBain, by a mysterious hooded figure. Somehow that murder has been pinned on you.

Countdown follows your attempts to escape and uncover the reason behind McBain's murder. You pursue your investigation by contacting various people. Some of these folks may be immediately helpful, while others may have to be coerced. The conversation interface in *Countdown* allows you to take different approaches (or even combinations of approaches) when questioning each contact.

Even after you begin learning the truth about your identity and McBain's murder, you quickly find yourself thrust into a plot involving international terrorists — and you have only a few days to stop them.

Along the way, you'll have

After leaving the Sanctuary, McBain's house should be one of the first places you visit. Some essential items are hidden in this room.


HE'S A PSYCHOPATH WHO KILLS FOR FUN! HE CALLS HIMSELF THE ANGEL OF DEATH. I MET HIM WHEN HE WORKED WITH SCORPIO. HE LOVED TO TALK ABOUT THE KILLINGS HE PERFORMED. EVEN SCORPIO WAS NERVOUS ABOUT WORKING WITH SUCH A CRUEL ANIMAL.
MASON POWERS
FONTAINE
GENERAL LEELAND
THUNDERBOLT
DOLPHIN
BLACK DECEMBER
EBERHART FLEISCHER
MICHAEL BIRKLAND
CANCEL

Golden Desire, the exotic dancer, is an invaluable source of information.

opportunities to acquire various items. As in most adventure games, it's wise to take anything that's not nailed down. (In *Countdown*, actually, there are a few nailed-down things you'll need, too.) Many of these items are interrelated and must be acquired in a certain order.

Once you've retrieved the Computer Access Device from your apartment, you can research and analyze many of the items you find. You can also book travel reservations to any place your contacts may point you. (One word of advice, however: Always fly instead of using the train. You're working against a time limit, remember.)

Countdown is a direct descendant of Access Software's earlier *Mean Streets*, with much the same look and feel. Most of the graphics are digitized images of real actors, actresses, and locales. And thanks to the patented RealSound audio, those who don't have a sound board can enjoy something other than the usual PC beeps and squawks.

Altogether, *Countdown* is another worthy addition to the role-playing realm.

GP

NINTENDO REVIEWS

ULTIMATE BASKETBALL

Brian Carroll

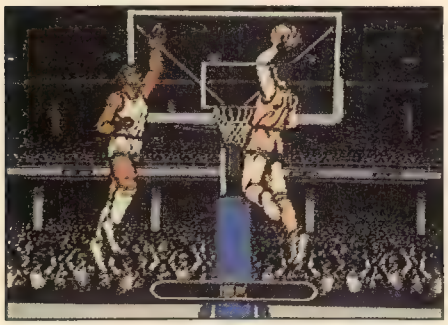
Version reviewed: Nintendo. American Sammy, 2421 205th Street, Suite D-104, Torrance, CA 90501.

There are certain challenges that designers of the ultimate basketball videogame must face. For one thing, they have to find a way to simultaneously move all ten ballplayers, each with his own objective.

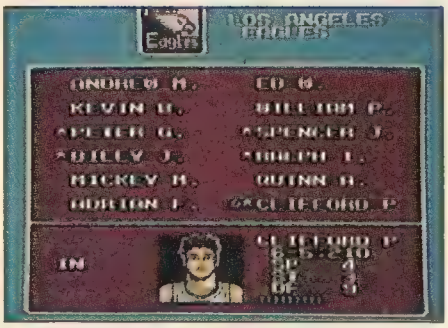
Since the average videogame player can control only one or maybe two ballplayers at the same time, the remaining eight must be programmed to do something that appears to contribute to the team effort.

Ultimate Basketball isn't really the *ultimate* basketball videogame, but it is a *realistic* basketball game. Unlike other basketball games for Nintendo, it puts a full ten players on the court, and the action resembles what you might find in a pick-up game. Also, it requires some real basketball skills, such as good shooting, good defense, and accurate passing.

This is an important point, because in most basketball games for Nintendo, good shooting doesn't matter very much. Whether you shoot the ball from half-court or from directly under the basket, your chances of scoring are about the same. But *Ultimate Basketball* rewards you for taking good shots, and it takes the defensive pressure into account, too.



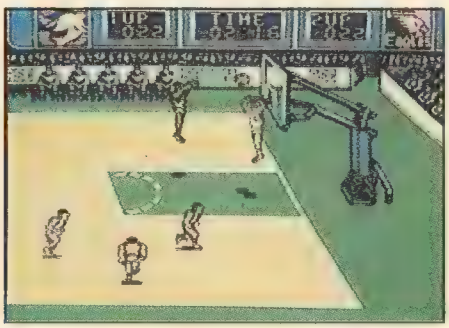
Closeup screens appear for slam dunks, free throws, and three-pointers.



You can pick your own starting lineup and decide when to substitute.

For instance, if you're trailing by several buckets, try getting the ball into the hands of a good shooter so he can launch a few three-pointers. To see who the sharpshooters are, check your players' shooting abilities on the roster screen.

The closeup screens that appear during slam dunks, three-point attempts, and foul shots add color to the game. On the whole, these closeups are exciting. But it's disappointing that the defensive player during slam dunks has no opportunity to block the shot. The dunker either stuffs it through or gets called for traveling.



Jump shots in the paint have the best chance of scoring two points.

The stamina meter on the roster screen adds a measure of strategy to the game. As the players grow weary, their shooting percentages and speed drop off. You need to monitor your starting five and be ready to send in fresh players, particularly in the second half.

As with some other basketball videogames, *Ultimate Basketball* puts too much emphasis on touch fouls and stealing the ball. You'll be harassed on offense by both defenders *and* referees, which can get frustrating. Before long, you may find yourself abandoning the fast break and switching your strategy to simply getting the ball across the center line.

GP

REVIEWS

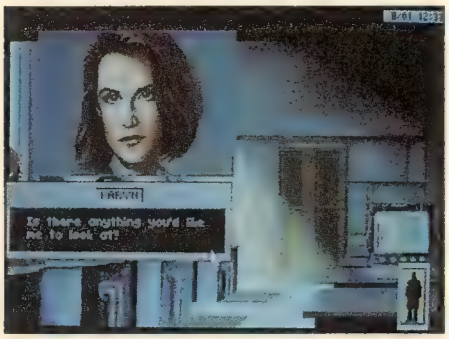
RISE OF THE DRAGON

Gary Meredith

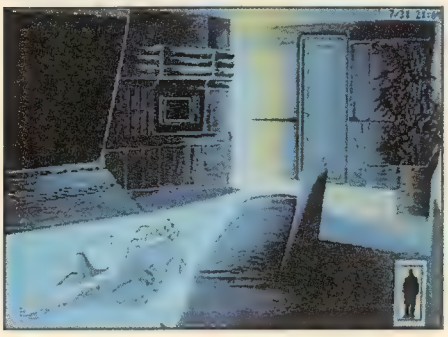
Version reviewed: IBM, Tandy, and compatibles (ten-megahertz or faster 80286-based computer recommended); 640K minimum memory; VGA graphics; hard disk and mouse strongly recommended; joystick optional; major sound boards supported. Dynamix/Sierra On-Line, P.O. Box 485, Coarsegold, CA 93614.

Omens of doom haunt the inhabitants of a dying Los Angeles. The year is 2053, and the Dragon — a dreaded supervillain — will soon arise to dominate the once-great city. To prepare for his return, the Dragon's followers are selling a horrible drug called MTZ that literally consumes its users.

As William "Blade" Hunter, an ex-cop and cheap private eye, you've been drawn into this deadly adventure. It started as a simple investigation into the death of the mayor's daughter. Someone slipped the girl some MTZ, but you soon discover that her death is much more than a routine homicide. Somehow you must stop the Dragon's henchmen from poisoning the entire city.



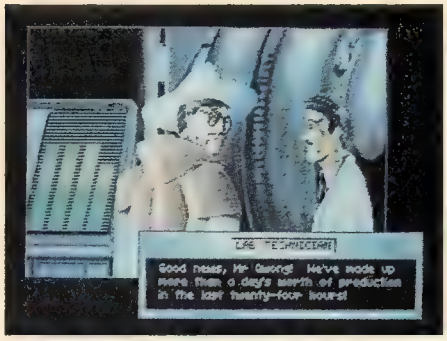
Try to remain on Karyn's good side. You never know when you might need the resources of the city's computer center.



There's a lot to be found in Chen's apartment, but you'd better be quick or you'll find yourself rotting away in the city jail.

Most of the time you'll have to rely on your wits and whatever items you uncover during your investigation. However, you do receive some help from a small-time operator known as "the Jake." And your girlfriend Karyn can be a big help — she works in the records department at city hall. Then there's the mysterious Chang Li, whose advice is often couched in maddeningly abstract philosophical epigrams.

Rise of the Dragon is a stunning game, vividly depicting a futuristic world of intrigue, mystery, and violence. Dynamix (now part of Sierra) has opted for digitized screens of hand-painted artwork, instead of computer art or digitized images of real actors and locales. As a result, the game has a very distinctive look — a cross between the movies *Blade Runner* and *Big Trouble in Little China*.



While you're entangled in the tortuous investigation, the Dragon's followers prepare for his triumphant return.

Although the game is playable with a keyboard, it's much better with a mouse or a joystick. The point-and-click interface allows you to move through the game at a fast pace and is especially handy in the arcade shooting sequences. About the only time you'll need to type anything is when you save a game. Of course, you'll probably want to save quite often, since this is a game in which death truly waits around almost every corner.

If *Rise of the Dragon* represents the fruits to be borne of the Dynamix/Sierra union, we're in for a truly bountiful harvest. The designers have done a wonderful job of simulating a believable future world — one which should engross even the most jaded gamer.

GP

NINTENDO REVIEWS

PRINCESS TOMATO IN THE SALAD KINGDOM

Jeff Lundrigan

Version reviewed: Nintendo. Hudson Soft, 400 Oyster Point Blvd., Suite 515, South San Francisco, CA 94080.

Every so often a game comes along that's just a little odd — one that stands out and gives you a moment's pause. *Princess Tomato in the Salad Kingdom* is one of those games.

It's an adventure that's played a little like *Shadowgate*, with different commands listed on the screen and a window that shows what your character can see. But that's where the similarities to almost any other Nintendo game end.

The background story is certainly offbeat. The peaceful vegetables of the Salad Kingdom were engaged in a long and terrible war against the Farmies, who only wanted to buy, sell, and eat them. King Broccoli succeeded in defending the kingdom and then decreed that all vegetables were equal, establishing a rule of harmony and justice in the land.

But the evil Minister Pumpkin rebelled. He united with the Farmies and established a new kingdom, one where pumpkins ruled everything and anyone who disobeyed was thrown in jail. Princess Tomato, the daughter of King Broccoli, formed an armed resistance against Minister Pumpkin. Then the princess was captured, and the king died from grief.

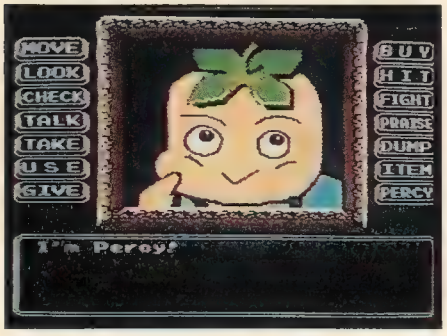
When the brave Sir Cucumber returned to the Salad Kingdom and heard what happened, he set off to rescue Princess Tomato and return peace to the land.

All this makes *Princess Tomato in the Salad Kingdom* one of the strangest games out in quite awhile. It's filled with slightly off-center humor that will make some people groan, but which nevertheless makes for a very interesting and different approach. For instance, combat isn't fought with swords or magic, but instead with rock-paper-scissors finger duels.

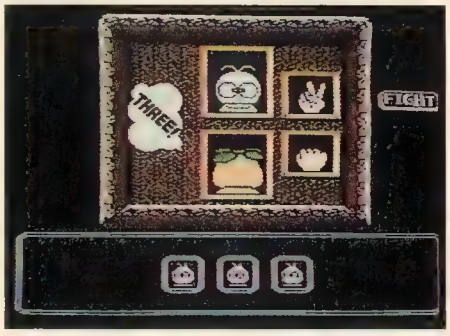
The game's main drawback for experienced players is that it's not very challenging. Almost every puzzle is pretty simple.

However, this ease of play — together with the game's gentle sense of adventure — does make *Princess Tomato* an excellent game for younger players. It might also entertain veteran gamers who've never tried a role-playing adventure before — or who want something a little different.

GP



Early in the adventure, you'll meet a persimmon named Percy who follows you for the rest of the game.



Finger duels are the only method of combat known in the Salad Kingdom — with careful timing you can usually win.

The most fearsome and powerful weapons in the Salad Kingdom are the terrifying Dice-O-Matics.

SEGA REVIEWS

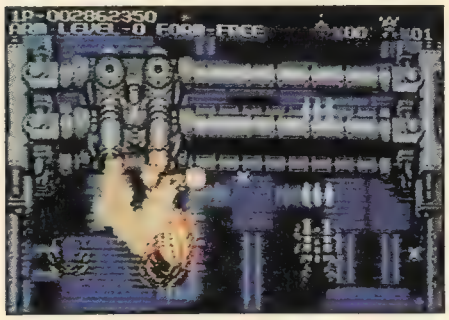
M.U.S.H.A.

Phill Powell

Version reviewed: Sega Genesis. Seismic, 3375 Scott Blvd., Suite 100, Santa Clara, CA 95054.

Videogames come and go. The good ones enjoy their moments in the spotlight. Without fail, though, exciting new games show up, determined to make you forget their predecessors. But it's easier to replace some games than others. Pity the aerial combat game that has to follow *M.U.S.H.A.* — it has a very tough act to follow.

In *M.U.S.H.A.*, you've been recruited to fly a virtual suicide mission through seven zones of enemy territory. Your battle suit is plated with Metallic Uni-frame Super Hybrid Armor — M.U.S.H.A.

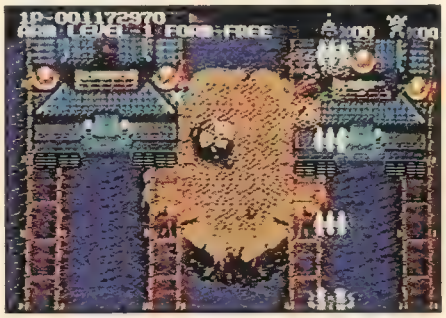


Hint: Aim your fire between the enemy's gun barrels. If you look carefully, you may find a face there — use it as your target.

Actually, your armored suit is your aircraft, and a quick and maneuverable suit it is. During battle, you can add new weapons (or strengthen existing ones) by snagging color-coded power-ups. Don't consider the power-ups optional. If you want to survive, you've got to find some strong weaponry.

Your adversaries are an original bunch, many of them displaying both human and machinelike qualities. For example, there's the flying boy's head that splits in half to reveal a laser, and the battleship with a demon's face. These hybrids are everywhere.

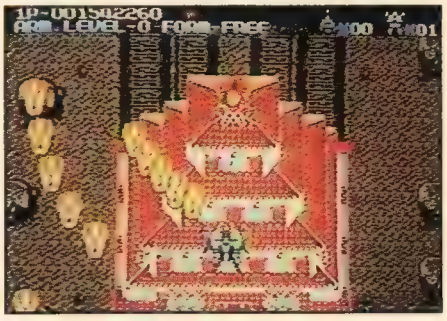
The backgrounds have both style and depth, with many layers of parallax scrolling. During one battle, you fire at insectlike creatures while zooming high above a volcanic river. When you destroy a creature, it tumbles down toward the flowing lava, seemingly getting smaller and smaller as it plunges to its molten death.



These twin-track tanks ride high above an island below. The parallax-scrolling graphics give the backgrounds a three-dimensional feel.

The action is engagingly busy, without lengthy breaks. The convenient rapid-fire mode lets you ruin more enemies without tiring your hands. A continue feature lets you resume the game at the beginning of the last level you achieved, saving you from having to go where you've boldly gone before. You'll also find a speed-select feature that gives you eight choices of how fast you can move.

It's difficult to imagine the next step up from *M.U.S.H.A.* With action this addictive and graphics this flawless, you may well scratch your head and wonder what's left to be brought to the home videogame screen. *M.U.S.H.A.* may not achieve anything new, but it does everything right.



Watch out for this flashing pagoda that shoots flaming skulls at the end of level 1.

GP

NINTENDO REVIEWS

GAUNTLET II

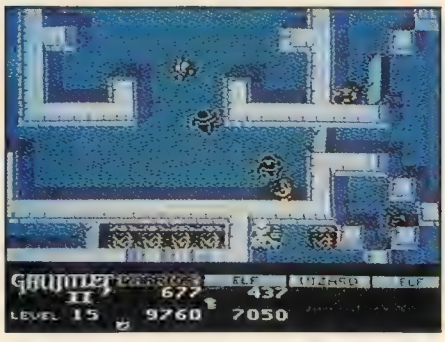
Jeff Lundrigan

Version reviewed: Nintendo. Mindscape/The Software Toolworks, 60 Leveroni Court, Novato, CA 94949.

Sometime in the misty past, a small group of heroes descended into the Dark Dungeons to fight countless monsters in their search for treasure and power. As they conquered each level of the mazelike dungeons, they would find an exit to an even deeper level. And so their journey went, further and further into the depths of the Earth.

That's the basic story behind *Gauntlet*, a longtime arcade favorite, and its sequel, *Gauntlet II*. Now you can play *Gauntlet II* at home on your Nintendo. The NES version closely duplicates the arcade version, retaining all the sounds and action. Not only that, but with the NES Satellite or NES Four Score adapters, the Nintendo version allows up to four people to play at once—just like the arcade version.

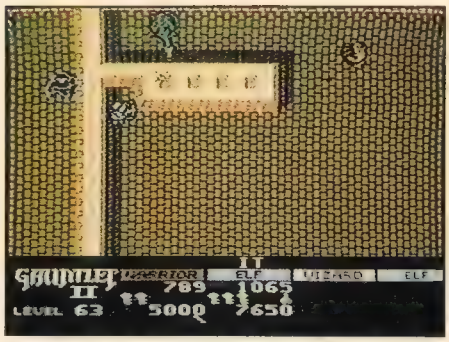
You can choose from four different characters, each with different abilities. They'll be familiar to anyone who has played the arcade game: Thor the warrior, Thyra the valkyrie, Questor the elf, and Merlin the magician. Each player can choose any character, even if another player has already chosen the same one. It's possible to play a game with four warriors, for example. All of the enemies from the arcade game are here as well, plus a couple of new ones, including the deadly fire-breathing dragons.



Anyone who's played the arcade game will recognize Death. The only way to kill one of these dark creatures is to use a magic potion.

Hint: Try to find special potions to counteract your character's weaknesses. For instance, warriors are slow but can drink this extra-speed potion.

Throughout your journey, you can find special items to increase your character's power and abilities. The key to survival is using these items intelligently. In multiplayer games, teamwork is essential, too. It may be necessary for some players to sacrifice their characters while other players build theirs up. However, since a dead player can jump right back into the game, this usually isn't a problem.

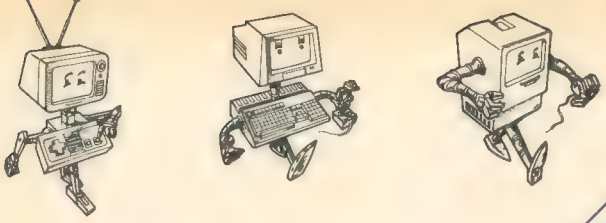
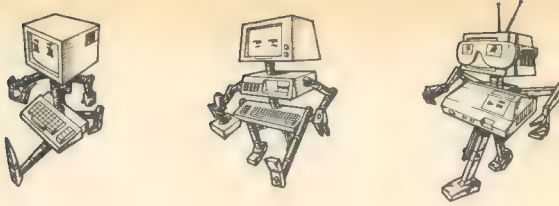


Hint: To defeat a fire-breathing dragon, position one character very close at a slight angle to its breath. Then another character can safely attack.

The biggest drawback in *Gauntlet II* is its thin storyline and lack of a solid goal. The game largely consists of room after room filled with the same kinds of enemies, over and over again. This is fine for an arcade game, but it would be nice to get a little more from a game you're going to take home and keep.

Gauntlet II is a good-looking game, though, with digitized sounds and some challenging rooms to conquer. It's especially enjoyable if you're a fan of the arcade game and play with a group of friends.

GP

GAME BOY REVIEWS

GREMLINS 2: THE NEW BATCH

Lisa M. Bouchey

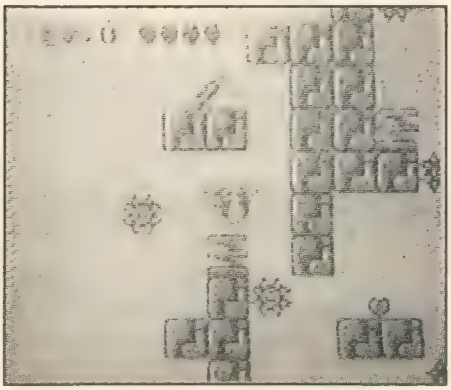
Version reviewed: Game Boy. Also available for Nintendo. Sunsoft, 11165 Knott Avenue, Cypress, CA 90630.

It's been six years since the Gremlins wreaked havoc on Kingston Falls. Gizmo and Billy Peltzer have gone their separate ways, but their paths are destined to cross again.

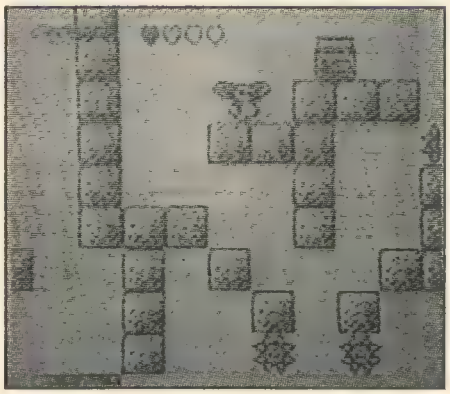
Gizmo had been living in Mr. Wing's Chinatown magic shop. But when Mr. Wing passed away, his shop was torn down to make room for businessman Daniel Clamp's Clamp Centre. Gizmo was abducted by a scientist and held captive in the Clamp Genetics Lab.

Meanwhile, Billy gets a job as a commercial artist in Clamp Centre. When he hears a mail clerk whistling Gizmo's song, Billy realizes his furry friend is somewhere in the building. He locates Gizmo in the genetics lab and rescues him — but not for long.

When Gizmo is sprayed with water from a drinking fountain, he unwillingly produces four new offspring — evil Gremlins spawned by the mysterious Mogwai reproductive process.



You can use the pencil as often as necessary to knock enemies out of the way, but you can't pick it up if you're holding a boom box or a tool chest.

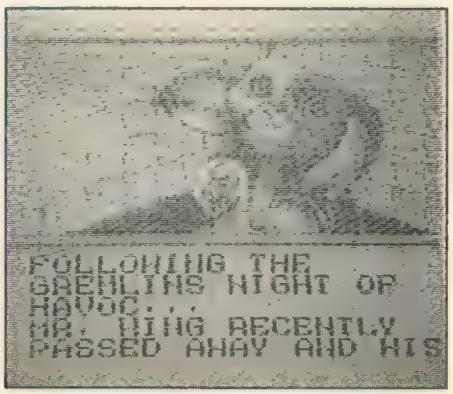


Stages 1 and 2 are fairly easy, but the mazes spread out and the jumps get more difficult later in the game.

In Sunsoft's *Gremlins 2: The New Batch*, it's up to you, as Gizmo, to save Clamp Centre from certain doom. You must work your way through four sections of the Centre: a TV studio, genetics lab, system control center, and lobby.

Armed only with a pencil, a boom box, or a tool chest, you won't have a problem overcoming the flying bats and spiders. If you run into a barrier or get hit by an enemy, you'll lose some of your strength. By picking up one of the small hearts scattered throughout the game, you'll restore one heart on your life gauge; by picking up a big heart, you can restore all four hearts of strength.

Gather as much strength as possible before facing each stage boss. In stages 1 through 3, a pencil is all you'll need to destroy the Mohawk, the Bat Gremlin, and the Electric Gremlin, but you'll need a bow and arrow to defeat the Spider Gremlin in stage 4.



The graphics in *Gremlins 2* are among the best available for the Game Boy.

Gremlins 2 has some of the best graphics we've seen in a scrolling action game for the Game Boy. The first two stages will be walk-throughs for most players, but even experienced gamers will find the last two stages challenging and fun — maybe even a little *too* challenging.

GP

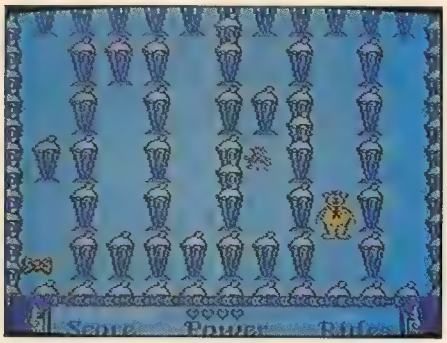
NINTENDO REVIEWS

MUPPET ADVENTURE NO. 1

William R. Trotter

Version reviewed: Nintendo. Hi-Tech Expressions, 584 Broadway, Suite 1105, New York, NY 10012.

Muppet Adventure No. 1: Chaos at the Carnival is the first installment in a projected series of Muppet games. It starts in classic fashion when the dreadful Dr. Grump kidnaps — er, *pig*naps — Miss Piggy.



In the ice-cream maze, Fozzie must beware of carnival barkers, large and small.

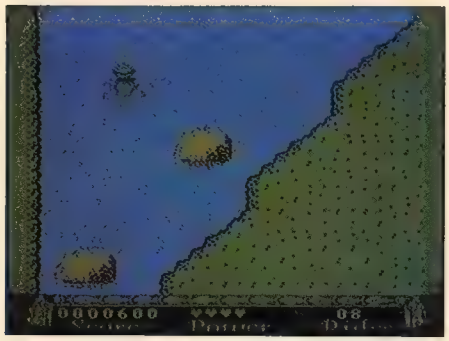
Gonzo's spaceship requires delicate control — use a light touch and short bursts of rocket thrusts.

Leading the daring band of rescuers is, of course, Kermit the Frog. He's aided by Fozzie, Animal, and Gonzo. The setting is a fairground, and each Muppet must complete one of four diabolically challenging carnival rides.

After conquering each ride, your Muppet receives a key. Kermit needs all four keys to reach Dr. Grump's hideout and duel him for the fair hand — er, hoof — of his bountiful heroine.

The four carnival rides give this game a nice variety of challenges. Fozzie has to find his way through a maze of ice-cream cones while being pursued by devilish carnival barkers; he can thwart the barkers by dropping banana peels in their paths. Animal must survive a bumper-car obstacle course. Gonzo has to pilot his way through a lost-in-space sequence and destroy a space station. And Kermit (appropriately enough) has to steer his way down the Raging River Ride, avoiding rocks and floating tree limbs.

After the Muppets get all four keys, Kermit alone must use them to enter the Cave of the Grumpasaurus, which leads to the place where his porcine princess is held captive. This last round is a tough one, partly because the animated frog is fairly hard to control on dry land. But hey, it's not easy bein' green!



Kermit won't last long on the Raging River unless he grabs periscopes to renew his power.

You can play the carnival rides in any order you choose.

As the late Muppets creator Jim Henson would have wanted, *Muppet Adventure No. 1* is very much a game for the whole family. It's challenging enough for veteran gamers, but not so daunting as to discourage younger players. Unfortunately, the game is marred by surprisingly flat, drab, unimaginative graphics — a disappointment, considering the imaginative characters on which the game is based.

GP

GAME BOY REVIEWS

HAL WRESTLING

Brian Carroll

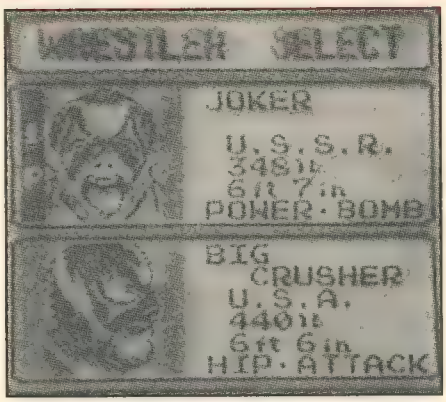
Version reviewed: Game Boy. HAL America, 7873 SW Cirrus Drive, 25-F, Beaverton, OR 97005.

Come on, admit it. You've always harbored a secret desire to be a professional wrestler. If it weren't for those embarrassing costumes, you'd do it, right?

Now, thanks to the miracle of videogames, your chance is finally here. Body slams, flying dropkicks, elbow-smashes — it's all possible in *HAL Wrestling*.

Although no actual professional mat men are represented in this game, *HAL Wrestling* still delivers many of the thrills and frills of the sport. Super Cyber, King Samson, and Joker — just three of the torso-twisters in *HAL Wrestling* — are just as flashy and imposing as Hulk Hogan and Andre the Giant.

As in real pro wrestling, you won't win many matches using only the basic kicks and punches. To score a victory, you need such special moves as the pile driver, the atomic drop, and the cobra twist, all of which take practice to master. The combination of buttons you must press to make some of these moves demands quickness and coordination.



Big Crusher is the largest mat man of the bunch — 6-foot-6 and 440 pounds!

To add even more challenge, each wrestler has his own array of special techniques. For example, Kim Riki is the only grappler capable of a scorpion drop.

After you get accustomed to using the various holds and tricks, learn which moves are appropriate for particular situations. For instance, if you're caught on the ropes, you'll need to know whether you should try a flying body press or a body slam.

The key to winning is to jump on your opponent after you've laid him out. It's simple to knock a man down, but trapping him in a damaging hold is more difficult and is the only way to get the pin.

For example, let's say you're Big Crusher and you've just unleashed a pile driver to hammer Joker into the canvas. Next, you should quickly hit the Start button to grab him in a sleeper hold. This will weaken him so you can finish him off later with a pin.

HAL Wrestling does a fine job with the Game Boy's graphics. The wrestlers are fairly distinguishable and their moves show a flair for the dramatic.

Since the game includes wrestlers of various sizes, strengths, and abilities, players of all skill levels should find *HAL Wrestling* a challenging contest.

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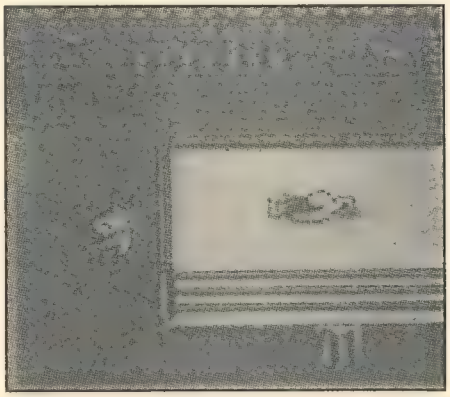
The Death Monster unleashes his secret weapon.



When a wrestler is forced out of the ring, he has 20 seconds to climb back in.

GAME BOY REVIEWS

CHASE H.Q.

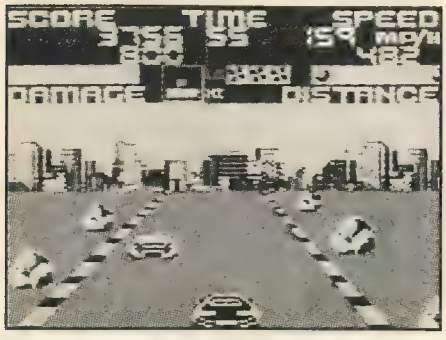
Richard Lashley

Version reviewed: Game Boy. Taito, 267 West Esplanade, North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V7M 1A5.

Turn on the ignition and listen to the throaty growl as your car's turbocharged engine comes to life. Then shift into low and punch the gas. The sudden acceleration flattens you into the driver's seat. You're on a dangerous mission — to force high-speed crooks off the road!

Chase H.Q. is Taito's new Game Boy version of the arcade driving game. Unlike most other driving games, your goal is not just to stay on the highway, but to chase down and arrest criminals. Each level has a criminal boss you must capture within a time limit.

As you race toward the finish, the fleeing enemy is highlighted by a flashing arrow and a blaring alarm.



Running into innocent Sunday drivers costs you time and hundreds of bonus points.

To make up for not having a steering wheel, *Chase H.Q.* lets you decide which buttons work the accelerator, gearshift, and turbocharger (which gives you a short burst of extra speed).

In some ways, *Chase H.Q.* is a little more forgiving than some driving games. For instance, your car doesn't automatically explode when you sideswipe an innocent driver or run off the road. By steering in the direction of the skid, you can wrestle your car back under control.

If you catch the felon at the end of each chase within the set time, you'll earn a credit point and advance to the next level. You can also advance *without* completing each level successfully, but you'll score fewer points.

The bosses don't get any tougher as you go along, but the roads become much more difficult. You'll be dodging more cars, boulders, and tumbleweeds on every level. Just staying on the road adds to your score.

Quick reflexes and a lead foot helped you chase down and arrest this crook!

How you ram a villain's car also determines how many points you get. On level 5, for example, rear hits are worth up to 5,000 points while sideswipes are worth as much as 9,000. A good way to make a sideswipe is to pull up next to the criminal's car by using the turbocharger, then slam into him sideways. You get only three turbo boosts per level, though, so save them for the end of the level — otherwise you'll be left in a cloud of burnt rubber.

The sound effects and fast-tempo music in *Chase H.Q.* help add excitement to the game, but don't expect much visual pizazz or variety — you may find the screens visually monotonous.

GP

NINTENDO REVIEWS

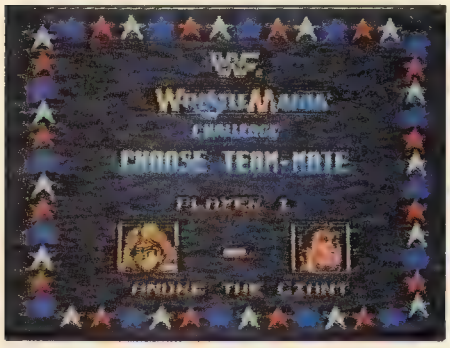
WRESTLEMANIA CHALLENGE

Matthew A. Firme

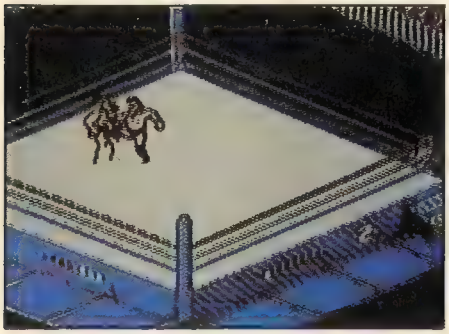
Version reviewed: Nintendo. LJN, 189 South Street, Oyster Bay, NY 11771.

Acclaim's original *Wrestlemania* was a hit for two main reasons. It capitalized on the enormous popularity of pro wrestling (and particularly the World Wrestling Federation), and it took advantage of the continuing success of wrestling videogames in general.

The actual wrestling action in *Wrestlemania* wasn't terribly exciting, and the big-name wrestlers had relatively few moves for you to choose from. But the graphics were good and the characters were large, which helped the game become a success.



The new tag-team option lets you choose up to three grapplers per team.

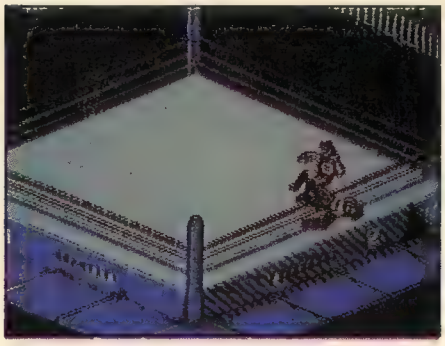


As you take hits, your strength meter turns white. When it's all white, you're vulnerable to the pin.

Now LJN is releasing *Wrestlemania Challenge*, once again featuring such well-known WWF stars as Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage. This time you can choose a team of up to three wrestlers for tag-team action, or go head-to-head against a single opponent. Either way you play, the opposing wrestlers can be controlled by the computer or a friend.

Each of the ten different WWF grapplers in *Wrestlemania Challenge* can perform eight special moves. Unlike the earlier *Wrestlemania*—which limited your attacks to punches and kicks, and allowed special moves only when your opponent was lying on the floor—*Wrestlemania Challenge* lets you use any move whenever you like.

Aside from the tag-team action and greater flexibility, however, this game is not much different from its predecessor. And although *Wrestlemania* left plenty of room for improvements, *Wrestlemania Challenge* doesn't offer many.



When you've got the enemy down, don't bother attempting a pin until you sap his strength.

In fact, one of the best features of the original game — the large, recognizable characters — is missing in the sequel. The wrestlers are now tiny figures, smaller than the wrestlers in some of the very earliest Nintendo wrestling games. This makes it difficult to see when you're in the right position to perform certain moves.

The vast black void around the ring makes the game's simple graphics even less exciting — a bit of color would have been nice.

Perhaps, like the original *Wrestlemania*, this version will succeed because of its WWF tie-in. But even Hulkamania seems to be waning a bit these days. And facing such competition as *Tecmo World Wrestling*, LJN's *Wrestlemania Challenge* could use a little Hulkamania.

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THE HOT 100

The Hot 100 is a list of video and computer games covered in recent issues of *Game Player's*. The ☆ symbol indicates games added in this issue.

KEY TO VERSIONS: **NES** (Nintendo Entertainment System); **Game Boy** (Nintendo Game Boy); **Sega** (Sega Master System); **Genesis** (Sega Genesis); **NEC** (NEC TurboGrafx-16); **PC** (IBM, Tandy, and compatibles); **AT** (IBM AT and compatibles only); **64** (Commodore 64/128); **Amiga** (Commodore Amiga); **Mac** (Apple Macintosh); **Apple II** (Apple II/II+/IIc/IIe); **IIGS** (Apple IIGS); **7800** (Atari 7800); **2600** (Atari VCS 2600); **XE** (Atari XE game system and 8-bit computers); **Lynx** (Atari Lynx); **ST** (Atari ST). *The first version listed in each entry was the version reviewed.*

☆ **Adventure Island II** continues the action-filled exploits of Master Higgins from *Hudson's Adventure Island*. The sequel has twice as many playing fields — 64 in all, spread over eight islands — and lots of new characters and scenery. Colorful and varied graphics make it a good challenge for players of all skill levels. HudsonSoft, for NES.

☆ **Adventures in the Magic Kingdom** is like six games in one. There's a trivia quiz plus five different action sequences that take place on amusement-park rides at Disney's Magic Kingdom. The object is to collect silver keys so Mickey Mouse can unlock the Enchanted Castle. A good game for younger players, although the graphics don't stack up to other Disney games for Nintendo. Capcom, for NES.

☆ **Aero Blasters** ain't no peace mission. As you pilot your supercharged jet through hostile skies, tunnels, and caverns, you'll face more bombs, bullets, and missiles than you can count — or probably dodge. This one- or two-player game is a frantic shoot-em-up of the first order. By demanding a variety of arcade skills, it remains fresh throughout. NEC, for NEC.

☆ **After Burner II** brings one of the most popular Sega arcade games ever made to the Genesis. As the pilot of an F-14 Tomcat, you must fight your way past hundreds of enemy jets and missiles. Although it's not a true flight simulator (the plane flies automatically, with very limited maneuverability), the game succeeds in capturing the exciting look and feel of the arcade version. Sega, for Genesis.

☆ **Arch Rivals** is a basketball game that might better be called *Michael Jordan's Punch-Out*. Are you up against a tough opponent? No problem — just deck him with a rabbit punch and steal the ball. There's no such thing as fouls in *Arch Rivals*. Yet despite the free-for-all rules, you can still dribble, pass, fake, shoot, steal, snatch rebounds, block your opponent's shots, and perform slam-dunks. Fast-moving and entertaining. Acclaim, for NES.

☆ **Atomic Robo-Kid** is a shooter set on the planet of Terran 12, where rising radiation has driven the people underground and mutated all life. The only hope for survival is Atomic-Robo Kid, a spunky robot who alone can fight his way past the mutants. Challenging game play is enhanced by glossy graphics and a sense of humor. Treco, for Genesis.

☆ **Back to the Future II/III** combines *two* movie sequels in one game. The first part takes place in 1955, 1985, and 2015. As Marty McFly, you have to collect 30 objects and return them to their proper time periods. Then you journey back to the Old West for another adventure with Doc Brown. Although the scenes don't resemble those in the movies, the graphics are above average, and the play will challenge even expert gamers. LJN Toys, for NES.

Balance of the Planet is game designer Chris Crawford's expansive follow-up to *Balance of Power*. This time you play a United Nations high commissioner who controls all decisions affecting Earth's environment. It's an awesome job, because you soon learn the complex relationships between scientific research, industrial and agricultural production, pollution, conservation, family planning, overpopulation, and much more. Not just a game, it's really a first-class educational tool that's also interesting to play. Chris Crawford Games (distributed by Accolade), for PC, Mac.

☆ **Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure** is based closely on the movie. Your wacky mission is to journey through time to find famous dudes and bring them back to present-day California so Bill and Ted can pass their high-school history test. It's geared more toward younger players or fans of the movie, but still has its bodacious moments. Capstone, for PC.

☆ **Blue Max** revives the romance of World War I aerial combat. You can play on either side and try several different play options, including dogfights, strafing and bombing missions, and a strategy-oriented board-game mode. Various views and instant replays add to the fun. Ideal for those who feel frustrated by more realistic (and difficult) flight simulators. Three-Sixty, for PC, Amiga.

Bonk's Adventure is NEC's answer to Nintendo's popular *Super Mario Bros.* series. The star is a cute caveman named Bonk who subdues enemies by bashing them with his rock-hard head. Bonk is on a quest to save Princess Za from the evil King Drool, and he encounters numerous prehistoric obstacles. A charming, cartoonlike game for all ages. NEC, for NEC.

☆ **Boxy Boy** is the first true puzzle game for the TurboGrafx-16. All you have to do in each of the game's 100 rooms is push a number of crates onto a matching number of white dots. The catch is that you can only *push* the crates, not pull them, and each room is a maze. *Boxy Boy* basically requires you to solve the same kind of puzzle over and over, but if you like the puzzle, you'll like the game. NEC, for NEC.

☆ **Bubble Ghost** is an action-puzzle game with an interesting story. To reach his eternal rest, a lonely ghost must make his way out of his castle without letting any of his spirit bubbles burst — which means he must carefully blow the

bubbles through all of the castle's 35 rooms. *Bubble Ghost* is ideal for players of all ages. FCI, for Game Boy, PC, Amiga, 64.

☆ **Buck Rogers** is a science-fiction role-playing adventure set in the 25th century. You and your party of heroes journey across the solar system from Mercury to a climatic battle on Mars. Using the same solid, workable combat system found in SSI's fantasy games, *Buck Rogers* adds an equally impressive ship-to-ship combat system. SSI, for PC.

☆ **The California Raisins** have been kidnapped, and it's up to you to save them. As a wrinkled raisin yourself, your only defense is your ability to hurl blobs of grape jelly as you fight your way past Sour Grapes and Bad Apples to the Sky High penthouse where the Raisins are being held. Not a very difficult game, *The California Raisins* should appeal to younger players. Capcom, for NES.

☆ **Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse** goes back in time to the beginning of the Belmont family and the start of their troubles with Dracula. As Trevor, an ancestor of Simon (the star of *Castlevania* and *Castlevania II*), you must stop Dracula from conquering all of mankind. Good graphics and action make this "prequel" a worthy addition to the *Castlevania* series. Konami, for NES.

☆ **Chew-Man-Fu** is a creative, unusual game with bright, cartoonish graphics. Two sisters named LaLa and LingLing are trying to defeat the evil Chew-Man-Fu, who has committed the dastardly crime of depriving everyone in China of their fried rice and egg rolls. The main action involves kicking a ball at the menagerie of animals guarding each stage. An odd game, but fun. NEC, for NEC.

☆ **Circus Caper** is about an evil ringmaster, Mr. Magic, who kidnaps your sister Judy. To get her back, you must survive six circus acts and fight everything from trapeze artists and monkeys to egg-walkers and hammer-throwers. The simple graphics and plot make *Circus Caper* a good game for younger players. Older players may find the graphics a little *too* simple, but the game is still challenging and fun to play. Toho, for NES.

☆ **Columns** is the latest *Tetris*-inspired fast-action puzzle game, and the closest you're likely to get to *Tetris* on the Sega Genesis. As colored objects gradually fall from the top of the screen, you have to arrange them in patterns at the bottom of the screen to make them disappear. It won't win any awards for originality, but it's fun nevertheless. Sega, for Genesis.

☆ **Dark Heart of Uukrul** is a very playable fantasy role-playing game. Your quest is to liberate the once-great city of Eriosthe by defeating Uukrul, an evil ancient. Nothing unusual there, but unlike some fantasy games, *Uukrul* is fast-moving and unintimidating. The combat system isn't too time-consuming, and you can quickly teleport from place to place. Yet it's still challenging and quite addictive. Broderbund, for PC.

☆ **Days of Thunder** is a racing game patterned after last summer's movie. It offers seven different NASCAR tracks, each with its own characteristic straightaways and turns. Although there's plenty of challenging race action, there's an odd and frustrating pit system, and not much graphic pizazz. Mindscape/The Software Toolworks, for NES, Game Boy, PC.

Devil's Crush is the sequel to *Alien Crush*, and it's an even better pinball simulation than the original. The three-screen-high pinball table is crawling with spectacular animated graphics — among the best we've seen for the TurboGrafx-16. Skulls, demons, gargoyles, dragon ladies, and frightening little monks are just a few of the attractions. NEC, for NEC.

☆ **Dick Tracy**, based on last summer's movie, puts you in a yellow trenchcoat as you roam the city in search of clues and crooks. Can you prove that Big Boy Caprice is behind the current crime wave? As an action-adventure game, *Dick Tracy* is a step above the average shoot-em-up. The graphics are crisp and clean (though a bit repetitious), and the crime-solving puzzles add a nice twist. Bandai America, for NES.

☆ **Dirty Harry** is an action-strategy game with the accent on action. Armed with Harry's trademark .44 Magnum, you must stop a Colombian drug lord who's setting up shop in San Francisco. While the game lacks Harry Callahan's personality, it's still a solid shoot-em-up that players of all skill levels will find challenging. Mindscape/The Software Toolworks, for NES.

☆ **Dr. Mario** relegates the Italian plumber of *Super Mario Bros.* fame to a bit part — a doctor who tosses colored vitamin capsules into a jar of unruly viruses. Only by aligning the capsules to match colors can you eliminate the viruses and save Dr. Mario's runaway medical experiment. Like *Tetris*, its inspiration, *Dr. Mario* is fun, fast-paced, and very, very addictive. Nintendo, for NES, Game Boy.

☆ **Dragon Warrior II** is a gripping role-playing adventure — the second installment in the most popular series of Nintendo games in Japan. As the descendant of Erdrick the Great, it's up to you to free a stricken land from the evil sorcerer Hargon. One of the largest and most complex RPGs available for Nintendo. Enix, for NES.

☆ **Dragon's Lair**, an arcade classic, now comes to the NES as an action game with kick. As Dirk the Daring, you descend into the domain of Singe the dragon to rescue the beautiful Daphne. State-of-the-art graphics and animation make a challenging game that's recommended for experienced players. CSG Imagesoft, for NES, Game Boy.

DuckTales delightfully captures the spirit of Walt Disney cartoons. You guide Scrooge McDuck (with cameo appearances by other Disney characters) throughout the world on a quest for five legendary lost treasures. The amusing graphics are vintage Disney, there's no gruesome violence, and the skill level is challenging without being too difficult. Capcom, for NES, Game Boy.

☆ **Earthrise** is an outer-space adventure that puts you on the trail of missing asteroid miners. You soon find the asteroid deserted — well, almost. Suddenly you're fighting nasty creatures while trying to repair the asteroid's guidance and propulsion mechanisms. Like Sierra's *Space Quest* series, *Earthrise* is an addictive game with mind-stretching puzzles and a sly sense of humor. It's also quite challenging. Interstel, for PC.

Faces...Tris III is the third iteration of *Tetris* from Soviet game designer Alexey Pajitnov. As in the original *Tetris* and its first sequel, *Welltris*, your job is to guide falling puzzle pieces into orderly piles at the bottom of the screen. But this time the pieces are parts of famous people's faces. As a result, this nonviolent game is both comfortably familiar and delightfully different. Spectrum HoloByte, for PC, Amiga, Mac.

☆ **Frankenstein** has kidnapped Emily, the daughter of a village elder, and has gathered a band of monster bodyguards to protect himself. You must punch, kick, and use whatever weapons you can find to rescue her and confront the ultimate monster. This is a challenging game with a wide variety of graphics. Bandai America, for NES.

☆ **Gargoyle's Quest** is basically a quest game with heavy doses of action. Firebrand, the guardian gargoyle of the Realm, must search the kingdom for the sole heir to the Red Gargoyle. A fast-paced adventure that should challenge experts as well as beginners. Capcom, for Game Boy.

☆ **The Immortal** turns you loose as an adventurous wizard in a mazelike dungeon. Your mission is to rescue an older arch-wizard who's being held captive. But this isn't

just another quest-in-the-dungeon game; it's a marvelous adventure with breathtaking graphics and an innovative point of view. Moody background music and careful attention to detail help make *The Immortal* an absolute knockout. Electronic Arts, for NES.

☆ **Ishido: The Way of Stones** is an amalgam of strategy games from many cultures, though it draws most heavily on games from ancient China. You place stones decorated with colors and symbols on the game board one by one, trying to match them with other stones. Flexible options and beautiful graphics make this contemplative game a good break from fast-action shooters. Accolade, for PC.

Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18 Holes of Major Championship Golf unites 18 of the Golden Bear's favorite holes into one ultimate course. From St. Andrews to Augusta National to Pebble Beach, it does a great job of simulating pro golf. Wind conditions, hazards, and the club you choose all play a part. Although the lack of an overhead view makes putting more difficult, this is a first-class golf game. Konami, for NES; Accolade, for PC, 64, Amiga, IIGS.

☆ **Jack Nicklaus Turbo Golf** is available for the TurboGrafx-16 as both a cartridge and a CD. The two versions are nearly identical, except the CD has five courses instead of one, plus Jack's digitized voice and two more musical soundtracks. Either way, you can't go wrong. Unlike NEC's *Power Golf*, this is a true simulation that adheres closely to the computer version — it's more realistic *and* more difficult. Accolade, for NEC.

Jack Nicklaus Unlimited Golf & Course Design is not only an excellent golf simulation, but is also a brilliantly innovative course-design tool. With on-screen advice from Nicklaus himself, you can create or modify almost any kind of terrain, complete with bunkers, lakes, roughs, and greens. You can even position trees, rocks, and buildings. Easy to use and extremely satisfying. Accolade, for PC, Amiga.

☆ **John Madden Football** is probably the best football simulation around. You can choose from 17 different NFL teams, each with real-life strengths and weaknesses. Unequalled graphics, bone-crunching sound effects, and a perfect blend of strategy and action make this game a real winner. Electronic Arts, for Genesis.

Jordan vs. Bird lets you step into the basketball shoes of either Michael "Air" Jordan or Larry "Sharpshooter" Bird for a climactic one-on-one match, a slam-dunk contest, or a three-point shootout. Your opponent is controlled by either the computer or a friend. The three-point shootout is a bit tiring, but the one-on-one match is the highlight of the game. Milton Bradley, for NES; Electronic Arts, for PC, 64.

☆ **King's Bounty** combines elements of role-playing adventures, war games, and puzzle games. The object is to recover a stolen scepter and save the world, but it's the unique combination of strategy elements that supplies the real interest. There's a lot to do, but the player interface makes it all pretty easy. New World Computing, for PC.

Klax is a fast-action puzzle game that's really a second-generation *Tetris*. As colored blocks clatter down a ramp, you have to catch them with a paddle and arrange them at the bottom of the screen for points. It's simple, challenging, and engrossing. And like *Tetris*, all versions are equally good. Tengen, for NES, NEC, Genesis, Lynx, PC, Amiga, ST, 64.

☆ **Lakers versus Celtics** is a basketball game for fans of real basketball. Many of the game's statistics reflect those of the real world, and the more you know about the actual teams, the better you'll be at choosing the right offense and defense. This is one game that successfully captures many of the thrills of real NBA basketball. Electronic Arts, for Genesis.

☆ **Legendary Axe II** is a hack-and-slash action game that plays much like the original *Legendary Axe*. Although it lacks innovation, it's quick, action-packed, and nice to look at. If you're in the mood for something different, look elsewhere — but if you liked the original, you'll like the sequel. NEC, for NEC.

☆ **Little Nemo: The Dream Master** is a gentle game starring a turn-of-the-century comic-strip character. As Little Nemo, a sleeping kid in a nightshirt, you journey through an odd fantasy world, dealing with enemies by tossing candy at them or turning yourself into various animals. Recommended for intermediate players; experienced gamers will probably consider most of the game a warm-up. Capcom, for NES.

☆ **Lord of the Rings** is a fantasy role-playing adventure that successfully captures the spirit of Tolkien's novels. It has all of the familiar places and characters of the books, and keeps things interesting by adding new quests. The player interface is a snap, helping to make *Lord of the Rings* the most successful Tolkien adaptation so far. Interplay, for PC.

☆ **Low G Man** takes place in the year 2284, when militant aliens have seized and reprogrammed a huge factory to make robots that kill humans. To recapture the plant, you lead a team of elite Low-Gravity Men who must leap, jump, and shoot their way to victory. Good graphics, smooth play, and a tough but fair challenge. You may prefer a joystick over the standard control pad, however. Taxan, for NES.

☆ **Mad Max** takes place after the holocaust of nuclear war, when highways are battlefields and a human life is often worth less than a few drops of gasoline. Mad Max, a lone renegade in a souped-up car, struggles for survival in this lawless world. Like the movies on which it is based, *Mad Max* is mostly nonstop action. Straightforward and simple. Mindscape, for NES.

Mega Man 3 follows the same winning formula as the first two installments. The android Mega Man travels from world to world, defeating enemy robots and capturing their weapons for his own use. This time, though, the evil Dr. Wily has turned good (or has he?). Its great story, outstanding graphics, and exciting game play make it the best Mega Man game ever. Capcom, for NES.

☆ **Mercenary Force** is an arcade shooter set in 19th-century Japan. You must pick your four-man team from different types of mercenaries and select their formations as you battle across 72 different screens with more than 50 kinds of enemies. This game is one of the most complex and elaborate shooters available for the Game Boy. Meldac, for Game Boy.

Michael Jackson Moonwalker features one of the greatest pop stars in history on a mission to rescue the children of world leaders from the fiendish Mr. Big. You'll delight at the way Jackson's videogame character glides, dances, and moonwalks his way through this expansive action-adventure. The animation is so realistic it's like interactive MTV. Sega, for Genesis; soon for Sega.

☆ **Mondu's Fight Palace**, based on the computer game *Tongue of the Fatman*, is a bizarre boxing match that pits alien against alien in a series of no-holds-barred fights to the death. You enter the fray as a humanoid, but advance to other species if you're good enough. Each alien has special strengths and fighting skills, and you can buy magic spells with your winnings. Wild, violent, and imaginative. Activision, for Genesis, 64; *Fatman*, for PC.

☆ **Ms. Pac-Man** is a faithful adaptation of the famous arcade game. Anyone familiar with this maze-chase classic will enjoy the Lynx version, which lets you select your starting maze so you can skip the easier ones as your skill improves. Atari, for Lynx.

☆ **NBA All-Star Challenge** lets

you choose from four different variations: a one-on-one match between two NBA players; an accuracy shootout; a friendly game of H-O-R-S-E; or a free-throw contest. *NBA All-Star* does a fine job of squeezing these tall guys onto the Game Boy's tiny LCD screen, although the court is a bit small. Authentic and fun. LJN, for Game Boy.

Nightmare on Elm Street is a wild adaptation of the hit horror films starring the frightening Freddy Kreuger. Now *you* are the only one who can stop Freddy, and your only hope is to gather and incinerate his bones. But your mission is blocked by hordes of ghouls, ghosts, and monsters. With its attractive special effects, this game is almost as much fun to look at as it is to play. LJN Toys, for NES.

☆ **Ninja Spirit** is a large martial arts adventure that is NEC's answer to *Ninja Gaiden* (NES) and *Revenge of Shinobi* (Genesis). Your goal is to find and destroy the half-man, half-wolf creature that murdered your father many years ago. The action moves horizontally as you fight enemy ninjas and creatures while picking up weapons and power-ups. All of the screens are extremely detailed, with dark, brooding backgrounds. One of the best martial-arts games available for any system. NEC, for NEC.

☆ **Paperboy** is based on the arcade hit, with the same diagonal scrolling, zany hazards, and bonus obstacle courses. As the neighborhood paperboy, you must deliver newspapers to those who subscribe while vandalizing the houses of those who don't. Colorful and faithful to the arcade version. Atari, for Lynx; Mindscape/The Software Toolworks, for NES.

Phantasy Star II is a role-playing adventure that delivers all the fun and challenge of the original *Phantasy Star* for the Sega Master System, plus the added depth and complexity that 16-bit technology can offer. Gorgeous graphics, a compelling story, and a very welcome save-game feature nominate *Phantasy Star II* as one of the best titles available for the Genesis. Sega, for Genesis.

☆ **Pictionary**, adapted from the board game, is a mixed bag. When playing with a single player or single-player teams, it's as much fun as the original. Short action sequences enliven the play and reward you by revealing pieces of a puzzle you must identify. But when multiplayer teams compete, you must draw the pictures yourself using an on-screen cursor — a slow, frustrating exercise. LJN Toys, for NES; Domark, for PC, Amiga, 64.

☆ **Pinball Quest** is one of the most interesting concepts we've seen in awhile. It's an elaborate pinball game wrapped around a quest adventure, with the pinball itself as the hero's weapon, and assorted monsters instead of lights and bumpers. Although some pinball wizards may find the quest frustrating and tricky at first, it's still a very generous entertainment package. Jaleco, for NES.

Pipe Dream is an appealing strategy game that offers an interesting combination of logical challenges and fast, nonviolent action. The object is to build the longest possible network of pipes before a liquid called *flooz* reaches the end of the pipeline. Big scores require long, complex networks. Lucasfilm, for PC, 64, Mac, Amiga, ST, NES, Game Boy.

☆ **Psychosis** is a horizontally scrolling shooter dressed up in otherworldly graphics. You must battle your way through five stages of weird alien landscapes while piloting a highly maneuverable space fighter. Numerous power-ups put a wide variety of shields and weapons at your disposal. Although the game play is pretty standard, the graphics are original and interesting. NEC, for NEC.

☆ **Qix** is an excellent revival of a classic arcade hit from 1981. A very simple game with very simple graphics, it translates well to the Game Boy's small screen. Your goal is merely to fill in sections of the screen by drawing lines with the cursor — while avoiding some persistent enemies. It's fun, but some of today's gamers may find this golden oldie a little *too* simple. Nintendo, for Game Boy; Taito, for PC, Amiga, 64, ST, IIGS, and soon for NES.

☆ **Rad Gravity** follows the adventures of the most promising space cadet from the planet Quark as he races across the universe. Rad must find the lost Compuminds to restore the Intergalactic Union. This action-strategy game combines nice graphics and humor, but is rather difficult. Recommended for advanced players. Activision/Mediagenic, for NES.

Railroad Tycoon is a truly exceptional game that combines rich historical accuracy with the fun of *Monopoly*. Starting in the early 19th century, you begin building your railroad empire from scratch. The simulation encompasses everything from rate wars and corporate takeovers to train-dispatching and urban development, yet is amazingly easy to play. A real standout. MicroProse, for PC.

☆ **Rescue of Princess Blobette** is the sequel to the popular *A Boy and His Blob* for the NES. Princess Blobette has been taken prisoner by the Antagonistic Alchemist, and it's up to a young Earth boy and his friend Blob to save her. While not a huge challenge for experienced players, the game retains most of the charm and nearly all the playability of its NES predecessor. Absolute Entertainment, for Game Boy.

☆ **RoadBlasters** is a car-racing game that speeds you down a busy highway past merging traffic, explosive mines, and roadside cannons. You can shoot back with lasers and cruise missiles — a fairly accurate simulation of Los Angeles at rush hour. Noteworthy for its fast, smooth animation and digitized voices. Atari, for Lynx; Mindscape/The Software Toolworks, for NES.

☆ **Robo-Squash** is a futuristic cross between tennis, squash, and racquetball. The idea is to whack a bouncing ball past your opponent (either the computer or, with a Comlynx cable, another person) at the opposite end of an enclosed court. Three misses, and you lose the round. *Robo-Squash* lacks variety, but is the type of game that's more fun to play with two people. Atari, for Lynx.

☆ **Sands of Fire** is a war game set in North Africa during World War II. You can fight as a commander or as a driver (or both) against the German forces. As a commander, you can direct individual battles or an entire campaign for either the British or the Americans. A workable, menu-oriented user interface makes this simulation very playable and enjoyable. It's tense, fast-moving, and realistic. Three-Sixty, for PC.

☆ **Secret of Monkey Island** is Lucasfilm's latest interactive adventure, and it's every bit as good as *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. You play the role of young Guy Threepwood, an aspiring buccaneer who falls in with a strange crowd in the Caribbean. Soon you're off in search of a ghost pirate and his mysterious ship on Monkey Island, with many adventures along the way. Witty and fun. Lucasfilm, for PC, Amiga, ST.

☆ **Shingen the Ruler** is probably the best strategy game yet seen for Nintendo. You play a 16th-century warlord who's trying to unite Japan's 21 separate provinces. The military, political, and economic aspects have the depth and richness of a good computer game, but with the simplicity of play for which Nintendo games are famous. It's not for everyone, but it's a game many Nintendo fans have been waiting for. Hot-B, for NES.

☆ **Silent Service II** is an outstanding sequel to the popular WWII submarine simulator. Multiple skill and realism levels are complemented by enjoyable ease of play. The graphics define a new state of the art. Overall, *Silent Service II* is not only a worthy sequel, but a classic in its own right. Microprose, for PC.

☆ **The Silver Surfer** is an arcade shooter based on one of Marvel Comics' most powerful characters. The universe is threatened from beyond by the Majik Warriors, and you must defeat all six of them. The graphics and music are well above par, making this a solid, challenging game. Arcadia/Virgin Mastertronic, for NES.

Skate or Die: Bad 'n Rad for the Game Boy departs from the NES version of *Skate or Die*, which emphasized skateboard stunts. Instead, *Bad 'n Rad* is an action-adventure that pits you against bad guys and lethal hazards during your quest to rescue a damsel in distress. Although some of the flavor of California skateboarding has been lost, it's still a dynamite action game. Konami, for Game Boy.

Skate or Die 2 begins after you accidentally run over the mayor's wife's poodle with your skateboard. In retaliation, the city demolishes your skateboard ramp, and now you have to earn enough money to build another. Your quest takes you to shopping malls, city streets, and beaches. A much-improved and worthy successor to a million-copy bestseller. Electronic Arts, for NES.

☆ **Skull and Crossbones** is about two pirates who sail in search of treasure while guarding a beautiful princess. When the princess is kidnapped, they set out to rescue her. Although the plot is unoriginal, this action game has a bright and cartoony look coupled with a fresh, appealing style. But it can be a frustratingly difficult game, especially when played alone. With two players, it's more balanced. Tengen, for NES.

Slime World raises slime to an art form. On a putrid planet awash in scum and sludge, you can choose from six different missions. Most require you to escape from mazelike caverns dripping with goo and haunted by slimy creatures. Some missions demand arcade skills; others emphasize exploration. Up to eight Lynxes can be hooked together for multiplayer games. Delightfully disgusting. Atari, for Lynx.

☆ **Snake Rattle N Roll** looks like a game for the younger set — cute little snakes slithering around in search of food. But don't be fooled. This is a surprisingly inventive and engaging game that requires you to perform risky maneuvers and collect various items while racing against a clock. Strong visuals enhance the challenge. Nintendo, for NES.

Snake's Revenge is the worthy sequel to *Metal Gear*. Once again you play the role of Snake, an elite commando. Your mission: Stop Colonel CaTaffy, who together with the Higharolla Kockamamie is threatening the world with the Ultra-Sheik Nuclear Attack Tank. Really a cross between a role-player and a shooter, this is a big game with countless items and clues to discover and zillions of enemies to fight. Ultra, for NES.

☆ **Solar Jetman** is a nice-looking arcade shooter with a twist. The 12 pieces of the Golden Warpship are scattered on 12 different worlds, and only Solar Jetman can recover them. The catch is that each world has its own different kind of gravity, which makes handling your ship a real challenge. Tradewest, for NES.

Solstice combines action, adventure, and puzzle-solving with attractive graphics and amusing sound effects. The ultimate goal is to rescue a kidnapped princess, but the game is really a test of your mental skills as you move from one puzzle room to another within a mazelike castle. It takes clever thinking to overcome the game's numerous tricks and traps. CSG Imagesoft, for NES.

☆ **Spirit of Excalibur** is a role-player set in Camelot after the death of King Arthur. The realm is beset by the evil Mordred and Morgan Le Fay. As Arthur's successor, Constantine, you must assume the crown and once more raise the standard of Arthur. Although some players may lack the patience to deal with the game's more baffling elements, it's still one of the lushest and most beautiful adventures around. Virgin Mastertronic, for PC.

☆ **Streetfighter 2010 — The Final Fight** is a furious exercise in fisticuffs. As a world-champion street fighter and groundbreaking scientist, you have to brawl with a bunch of repulsive (and persistent) aliens who have stolen the formula for one of your inventions. This is one of the most action-packed games available, but even with unlimited continues, it's recommended for advanced players only. Capcom, for NES.

☆ **Strider**, adapted from an arcade game, is the story of a young warrior who is assigned the awesome task of thwarting an alien invasion of Earth. The Sega version of this game, at eight megabits, is the largest Genesis cartridge yet released. Lots of action and excellent graphics make it a winner. Sega, for Genesis; Capcom, for NES.

Super C is the sequel to *Contra*, one of the most popular Nintendo shooting games of all time. Once again, Sergeant Bill Ko and his comrade, Corporal Lance (alias Scorpion and Mad Dog) face a showdown with their old enemy, Red Falcon. Defeating him is easier if you tackle this one- or two-player game with a friend. The graphics and action are top-notch. Konami, for NES.

Super Mario Bros. 3 is the latest and most eagerly awaited chapter in the adventures of Mario and Luigi. Once again you must rescue Princess Toadstool from the clutches of the evil Bowser and free the Mushroom Kingdom from domination. Elaborate worlds, pipes, warp zones, and power-ups justify the unprecedented popularity of this massive game among Nintendo fans. Nintendo, for NES.

☆ **Super Star Soldier** is a fast-moving shooter that puts more objects on-screen at once than any other game we've seen. Bearing a strong resemblance to *Blazing Lazers*, it's the end-all of "shoot everything that moves"-type games, because *everything* moves. With arcade-quality 16-bit graphics, this game really delivers. NEC, for NEC.

☆ **Sword of Vermilion** is a fantasy role-playing game in the tradition of *Phantasy Star* and *Phantasy Star 2*. When the evil Tsarkon invaded

peaceful Excalabria, the king entrusted his infant son to a servant and sent them away. You play a young man who has no idea of his true identity, but your life is about to change. This adventure has the colorful graphics and involved storyline we've come to expect from Sega's RPGs. Sega, for Genesis.

Takin' It to the Hoop is a full-court, five-on-five basketball simulation that strikes an intelligent balance between action and strategy. You can't win without skillful manipulation of the control pad, but it also matters how you rotate your players from the bench to the court. Despite so-so graphics and drab sound effects, it's realistic and very entertaining. NEC, for NEC.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Fall of the Foot Clan brings the famous foursome of Leonardo, Donatello, Michelangelo, and Raphael to the Game Boy. Once again, the nefarious Shredder has kidnapped the beautiful April O'Neill, and the Turtles are rushing to her rescue. Incredibly, the graphics are even better than in the original NES version, and the stereo soundtrack is superb. Ultra, for Game Boy.

☆ **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles — The Arcade Game** is a bodacious sequel that's patterned after the arcade version rather than the original Nintendo version. All your favorite characters are here: the four Turtles, April, Splinter, and Shredder. This time the Turtles must rescue April and Splinter from the grip of brainwashed ninjas working for Shredder and a new villain, Krang. As action-packed and as much fun as ever. Ultra, for NES.

☆ **Test Drive III: The Passion** puts you behind the wheels of three supercars — the

Lamborghini Diablo, the Pininfarina Mythos, and the Chevrolet CERV III. Sit back and enjoy the northern California scenery as you compete in a road rally. New features include inclement weather, working wipers and headlights, and even off-road driving. But watch out for the cops! A must for auto nuts. Accolade, for PC.

☆ **Tombs and Treasure** is a unique game that combines some role-playing elements with arcade action and puzzles. You must venture into the ruins of the Mayan Empire and recover the fabled Sun Key to put an end to the demon Tentacula. Excellent graphics and puzzles and fantastic creatures make it a fascinating experience. Infocom, for NES.

☆ **Unreal** is the latest challenger for the title of top action game for the Amiga. In terms of graphics, sound, and difficulty, it's certainly an impressive contender. The 2-D side-scrolling scenes are incredibly detailed and beautiful. The 3-D first-person scenes — in which you fly on the back of a dragon — are somewhat less detailed, but amazingly fast. Overall, a striking display of 16-bit power. UBI Soft, for Amiga.

☆ **Wing Commander** lets you pilot four different types of spacecraft and pits you against the might of the Kilrathi empire. The course of the entire war rests with you. Simply the best space-combat simulation ever made for PCs, *Wing Commander* combines the tense excitement of an arcade shooter with a role-playing story of surprising depth and swashbuckling melodrama. Origin, for PC.

☆ **Wings** mixes aerial-combat simulation with arcade-action sequences and a believable historical storyline. You begin as Waldo Barnstormer, a pilot during WWI, and if you play through to Armistice Day, your missions will change as the war progresses. Excellent graphics and sound give *Wings* that special quality that turns a game into a lost weekend. Cinemaware, for Amiga.

Wizards & Warriors X: Fortress of Fear isn't really the tenth installment of the famous *Wizards & Warriors* series for NES; it's actually the first installment for the Game Boy. As the brave knight Kuros, you must penetrate the dreaded castle of the evil wizard Malkil to rescue a princess. Exceptional graphics and sound make this game a remarkable adaptation of the NES series. Acclaim, for Game Boy.

☆ **Xenophobe** is a simple bug hunt — all you have to do is shoot the aliens before they eat you. Adapted from an arcade game, *Xenophobe* is populated with many hungry creatures that try to keep you from liberating a series of space stations. The trick is to find the right weapons and keep shooting. As a shooter, it's not as imaginative as *Slime World*, but it's more interesting than *Gates of Zendocon*. Atari, for Lynx, 7800.

☆ **Yo! Noid** is based on the claymation character in the Domino's Pizza commercials — except that *you* are the Noid, and you're a good guy. Your mission is to save New York City from hooligans and your evil twin, Mr. Green. Magic spells will help, but can you survive the pizza-eating contests? *Yo! Noid* doesn't boast spectacular graphics, but it's a good, solid game with fast action and a suitably cartoonish style. Capcom, for NES.

☆ **Ys: Book I and II** is the first role-playing adventure to really take advantage of the TurboGrafx-CD player. It's actually two complete games in which you must defeat Dark Fact and collect the six books of Ys before continuing to Solomon's Shrine and taking on the evil Darm. The smooth player interface is enhanced by excellent graphics and CD-supplied sound and music. NEC, for NEC.

☆ **Zarlor Mercenary** is a furious space-shooter that was specifically designed for the Lynx. Choose between seven different characters and fight as a hired gun for the Zarlors against the Mendicants. Up to four people can play at once via Comlynx cables. Six stages of nonstop action. Atari, for Lynx.

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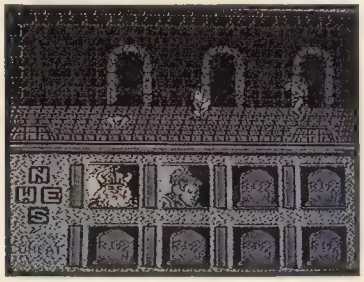
AND PREVIEWS

AD&D MAGIC FROM FCI

FCI is translating three popular computer role-playing games for Nintendo and Game Boy. Two of the games are from the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons series published for computers by Strategic Simulations, and the third is from the Ultima series published for PC's by Origin.

Heroes of the Lance, an AD&D game for NES, places you and a band of eight adventurers in the ruined temple of Xak Tsaroth, in the land of Krynn. Your quest is to find the enchanted Disks of Mishkal and defeat the dragon Khi Santh.



Beware of the dangerous enemies aiming to stop you in FCI's *Heroes of the Lance*.

Pool of Radiance, another AD&D game for NES, also takes place in the magical land of Krynn. You and a small band of warriors are looking for the mystical Pool of Radiance, which gives the worthy discoverer magical powers.

Ultima: Runes of Virtue is for the Game Boy. You play the role of a mage, a bard, a fighter, or a ranger on your quest for the Runes. *Runes of Virtue* can also be played with another person via the Game Boy's videolink cable.

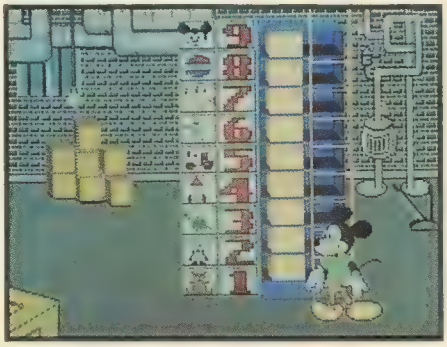
M-I-C-K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E

Walt Disney Software is introducing two educational computer games for young people: *Mickey's Colors & Shapes: The Dazzling Magic Show* and *Mickey's 1-2-3's: The Big Surprise Party*. Both titles are intended to introduce pre-school children to basic educational material and let the children learn at their own pace.

Mickey's Color & Shapes: The Dazzling Magic Show has Mickey performing magic acts for nine of his friends. Using a special keyboard overlay, Mickey teaches children five shapes and eight colors in three different magic acts.

In *Mickey's 1-2-3's: The Big Surprise Party*, Mickey and 11 of his famous pals teach children how to recognize numbers and count from one to nine. Mickey teaches in 18 scenes at four locations.

Both games are compatible with Disney's Sound Source, an amplifier/speaker that produces digitized speech, orchestrated music, and sound effects when connected to an IBM or compatible computer.



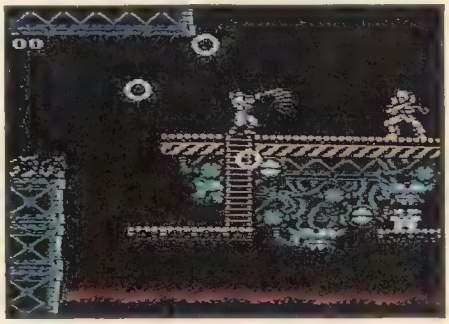
Professor Mickey teaches numbers in *Mickey's 1-2-3's: The Big Surprise Party*.

NATSUME CHALLENGE

Natsume is looking for a few good game players to take its Game Master Challenge — 200 of them, to be exact. Free Game Master Challenge sweatshirts go to the first 100 people who can beat Natsume's NES game, *Shadow of the Ninja*, and the first 100 to conquer its Game Boy title, *Amazing Penguin*.

To prove you've conquered the game, you must send the company a photo of the last screen of *Shadow of the Ninja*, or a photo of *Amazing Penguin*'s closing credits.

If you think you're a Natsume game master, send the photo and information to Natsume at 1243-A Howard Avenue, Burlingame, CA 94010.



Be a winner with *Shadow of the Ninja*.

AND PREVIEWS

GET A GRIP

Dugan DeZign's Stik-Gripper T.C.S. (Total Control Stand) provides a secure base for computer joysticks. It's a three-piece plastic stand that's compatible with almost any joystick, including the Gravis Switch Stick, the Gravis Mouse Stick, and the Beeshu Hot Stuff. Dugan DeZign particularly recommends the Stik-Gripper to flight simulator buffs.

The Stik-Gripper T.C.S. is a secure base for your computer joystick.

RETURN TO SKARA BRAE

The townspeople of Skara Brae are a long-suffering lot. Their homes have been reduced to rubble twice already, and now it's happened again in *The Bard's Tale III: Thief of Fate* from Electronic Arts.

In the third episode of this popular computer role-playing series, you are once again the leader of a group of adventurers. You must destroy the Mad God Tarjan, the master of the evil Mangar, whom you defeated in *The Bard's Tale II*. The new game has more magic spells, monsters, and dungeons than its predecessors.

COMPUTER METROPOLIS

Minitel Services has introduced Metropolis, a new on-line service for adult interactive-game fans. Unlike similar services, Metropolis is not organized like a database, but rather like a city — complete with citizens' directories, a visitors' center, a communication center, a recreation center, and a library. Game players access the on-line service via modem, and can use special Minitel software.

At the recreation center, "citizens" can choose from 21 different games — many of which are intended for experienced interactive players. Citizens can also converse with each other via their keyboards. Of course, as in any small town, all on-line citizens know exactly what everyone else is doing.

Metropolis costs 16 cents per minute in the U.S. and Canada. There are no monthly minimums or registration fees. If you're interested, contact Minitel at 2900 Westchester Avenue, Suite 101, Purchase, NY 10577.

GAME BOY SOUND BOOSTER

Nuby Manufacturing has released the Game Boy Amplifier, a sound booster that plugs directly into the headphone jack of a Game Boy. The Game Boy Amplifier boosts the audio signal and requires either a nine-volt battery or a six-volt AC adapter (sold separately).

Crank it up with Nuby's Game Boy Amplifier.

CHIP'S CHALLENGE FOR NES

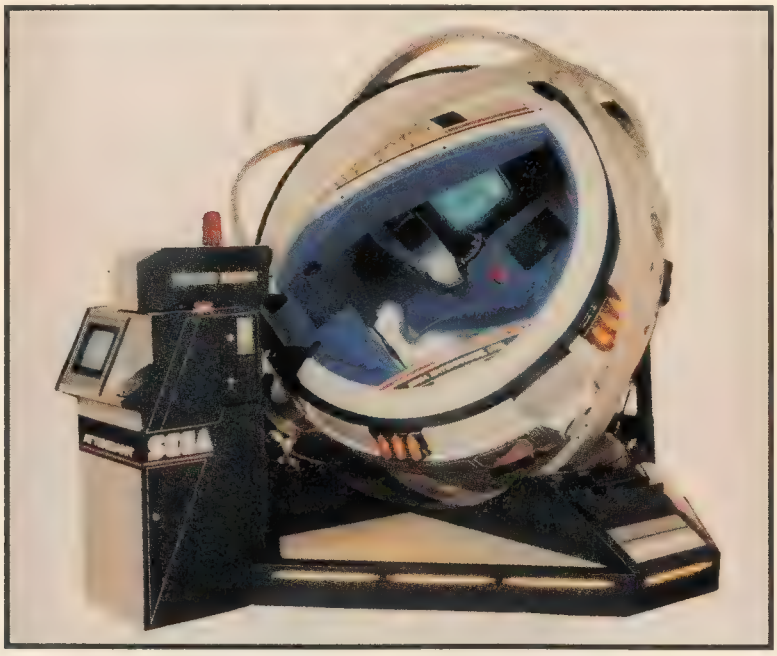
Bullet-Proof Software is planning to release *Chip's Challenge* — originally an Atari Lynx game — for Nintendo. *Chip's Challenge* is a strategy-puzzle game in which a boy named Chip must solve a series of puzzles to earn entrance to the Bitbusters Computer Club. Bullet-Proof Software says *Chip's Challenge* should be available sometime this fall.

AND PREVIEWS

ARCADE FLIGHT SIMULATOR

Sega Enterprises has a new arcade game for armchair pilots. The Sega *R360* revolves a full 360 degrees, allowing you to simulate many of the maneuvers possible in actual fighter planes.

To make sure you can't crash and burn in the *R360*, Sega has included such safety precautions as an attendant, a four-point safety harness, emergency stop buttons, doorway sensors, and a safety net.



Sega's *R360* represents a new generation in arcade flight simulators.

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American Sammy	21
Atari	8-9
Capcom	1, 23
Data East	BC
Electronic Zoo	11
Funco	57
Game Dude	90
Hot-B	3
Lucasfilm	13
Marketplace	91
MicroProse	7
NEC	14-15
Namco	26-27
Renovation Products	19
Sega	92, 93, 94
Taito	25
Telegames	87
Treco	5
Ultimate Game Club	95
Virgin Mastertronic	29
Visco Enterprises	96
Game Player's:	
Game Player's subscriptions	17
Game Player's Pro-Tip Hotline	35

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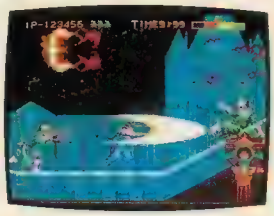
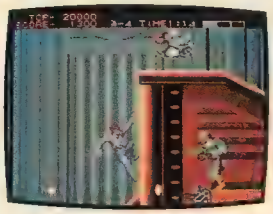
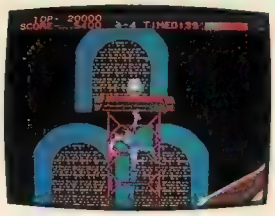


2. Beware of the burly machine gunners. Unleash your laser sword. Watch for the special item to get a super sword.



3. Use your grappling hook to clamber up vertical walls, while fierce guards attack without mercy.



4. On the top of a building, climb rickety scaffolding to build your stamina. Also collect a mechanical attack bird here.

5. Collect two drones and then you get the white mechanical panther to help in your assault, as he leaps at the moon.

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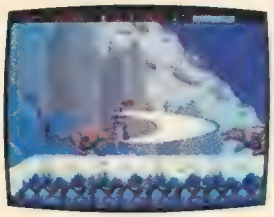
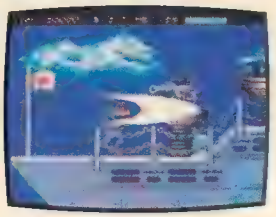


6. Mad wolves lunge at you from deep in the arctic wastes. Here you can get a friendly droid to help you battle the enemy.

7. In the midst of angled scaffolding, mechanized defenders rock on ball bearings as they try to blast you into atoms.

8. Within the forest you fling yourself onto swinging vines and meet Amazon women. Don't fall—deadly piranha fish infest the waters below.



9. Automatic cannon fire assaults you aboard the fleet cruiser of the evil empire. Soon you'll face its largest cannon—it's awesome.

10. You must face and defeat such mechanical minions of death, before you reach the inner sanctum of Number One.

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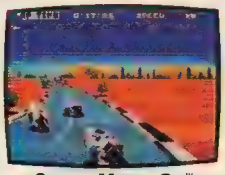
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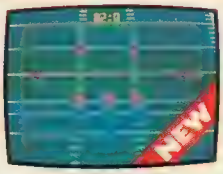

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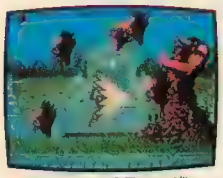
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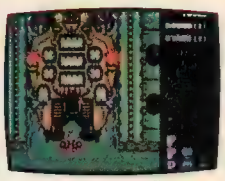
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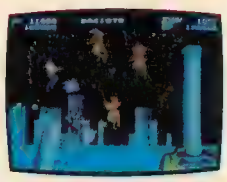
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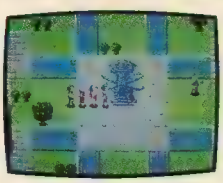
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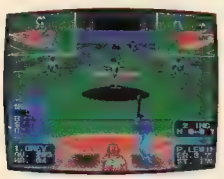
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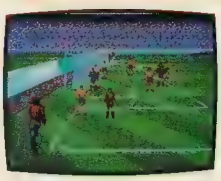
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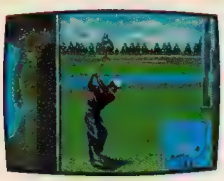
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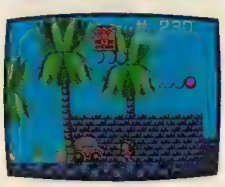
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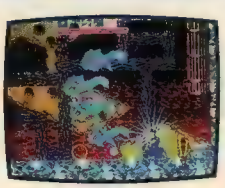
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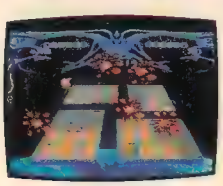
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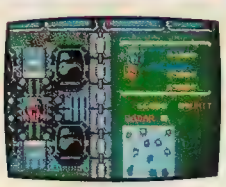
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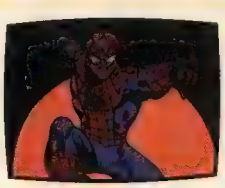
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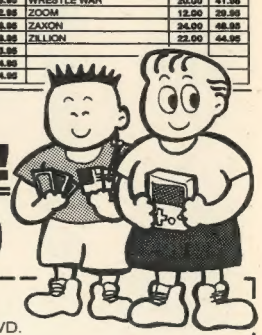

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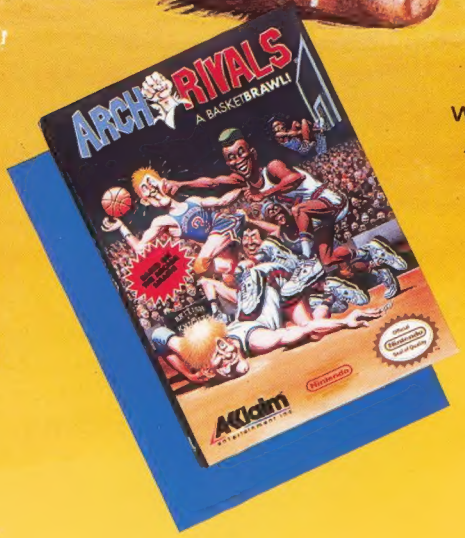

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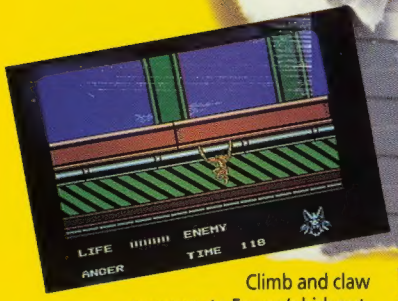

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